

# AMERICAN HISTORY

*Illustrated*

September/October 1989

## PHOTOGRAPHY: MIRROR OF THE PAST

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Marking 150 Years  
Of Photography  
In America**

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American  
photography**

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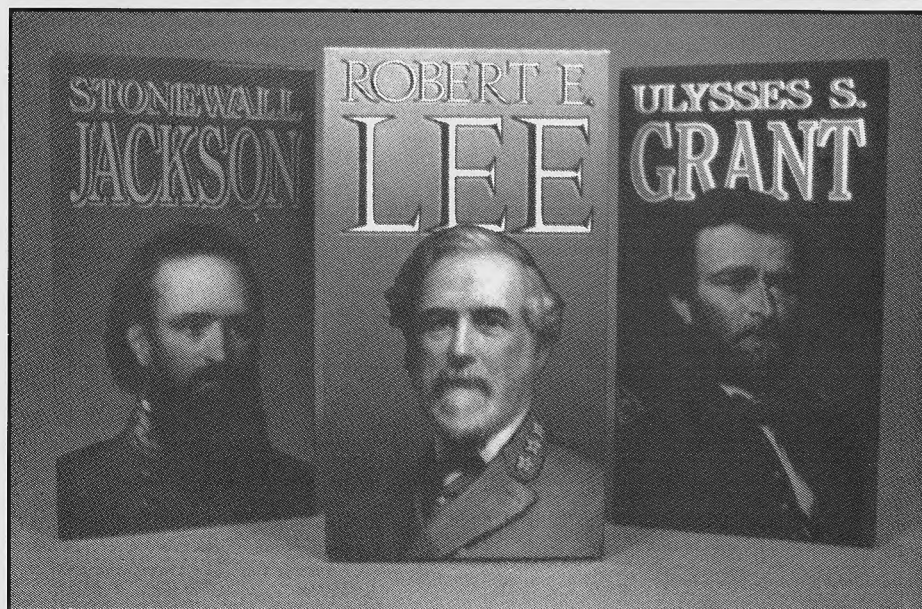
Abraham Lincoln refused to dismiss Grant early in the Civil War by saying "I can't spare this man—he fights!" This hard-drinking, one-time shop clerk became the Commander of the Civil War's victorious Union armies. This video unlocks the unusual character of Grant's life.

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## COVER

Photographic artifacts pictured in Lisa Masson's still-life include a nineteenth-century studio view camera, turn-of-the-century plate-back folding camera, early twentieth-century single-lense reflex, several stereographic viewers, and examples of daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, tintypes, cartes-de-visite, cabinet views, and other paper photographs.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LISA MASSON,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

ARTIFACTS FROM THE  
COLLECTIONS OF LISA MASSON,  
JAMES KEOUGH, AND ED HOLM

## FEATURES

# PHOTOGRAPHY: MIRROR OF THE PAST

## A Special Sesquicentennial Issue

One hundred and fifty years ago, in September 1839, the first American photographers made their first images—on metal plates called daguerreotypes. This special issue of *American History Illustrated*—featuring a fifty-page portfolio beginning on page 20—focuses on the formative decades of one of mankind's most remarkable and powerful mediums for communication and self-expression.



## DEPARTMENTS

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# EDITOR'S DESK



Photography is a medium with many uses, but perhaps its most significant role in our society has been as a chronicler of people and events. During photography's 150 years of existence, cameras have compiled a visual record (admittedly a fragmentary one) documenting more than two-thirds of our nation's history. The impact of that pictorial archive on our perception of the past is almost beyond calculation.

I find the photograph above (a mid-nineteenth-century daguerreotype by Boston photographers Albert Sands Southworth and Josiah Johnson Hawes) an illustration in point, symbolizing the gulf that separates the era documented by photography from that pictured only by the artist's pencil and brush. The identity of the young woman in the picture is lost to us, but through the miracle of photography she projects an unquestionable *reality* to the viewer. In the case of George Wash-

ington, however, that sense of humanity is denied us. Our perception of the first president and his generation—despite the genius of Gilbert Stuart and other artists—is a *mythic* view.

Through photography, for example, we can look with our own eyes into the haunted eyes of Civil War general Ulysses S. Grant (page 43), and we can see for ourselves the real price paid by those who fought in that conflict (page 48). Imagine how much deeper our understanding and appreciation of the founding fathers could be if photographers had been present at Concord Bridge and Bunker Hill in 1775, and if camera lenses had recorded the faces of such men and women as Thomas Jefferson, George and Martha Washington, and Ben Franklin!

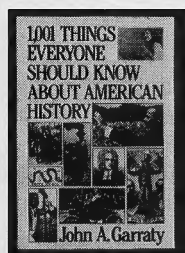
*Ed Holm*



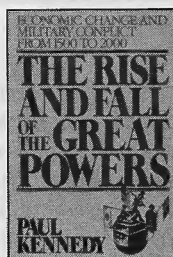
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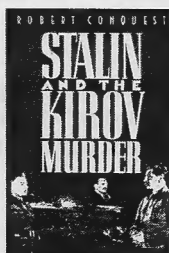
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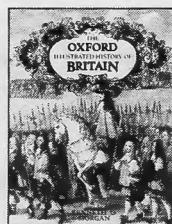
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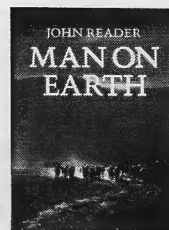
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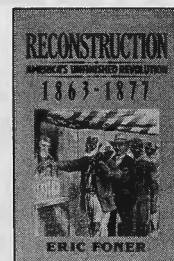
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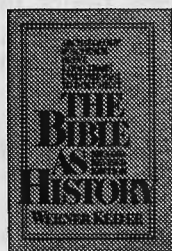
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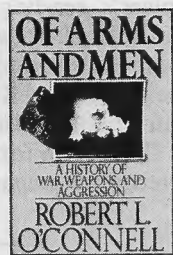
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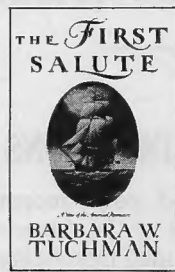
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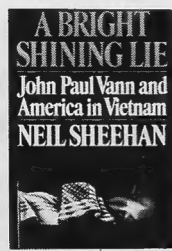
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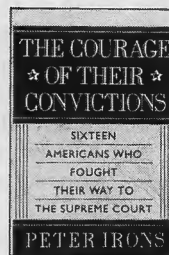
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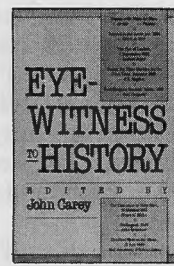
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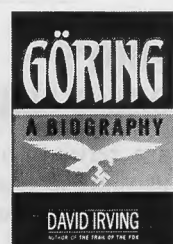
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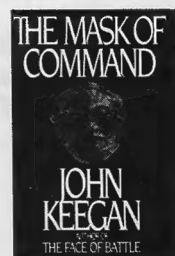
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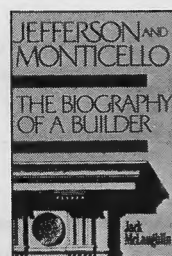
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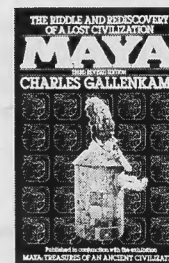
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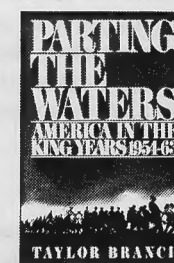
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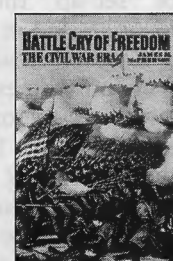
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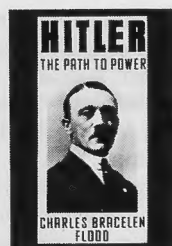
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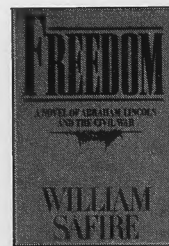
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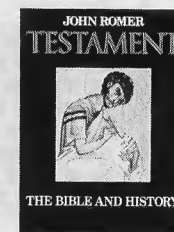
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# MAILBOX

## GODDARD AHEAD OF HIS TIME

In the Summer 1989 issue, the well-presented article on Robert H. Goddard's early rocket experiments brought out some shame in me, for in my early years (I am now seventy-eight), I can remember being at the movies and seeing "newsreels" ridicule Goddard's attempted rocket launchings—all of which failed. A Fourth of July skyrocket could do better. I laughed as loud as anyone else, but Goddard was far ahead of all of us.

My hat is off to *American History Illustrated*. Of all the magazines I receive or see, it is the best. I read it from cover to cover. The articles are always clear, well written, and helpfully illustrated. The subject matter is always an excellently informative

section of American history, living up to the title—and you don't have to go through pages and pages of advertising.

Keep up the good work.

—Albert W. Ullmann  
Waldwick, New Jersey

## MORE MAJOR PRESIDENTIAL DECISIONS

I especially enjoyed your recent [April] issue devoted to the American presidency. It exuded interesting facts and stories. Your brief biographies were a rare, unbiased, accurate assessment of our presidents.

I would like to add my own list of monumental presidential decisions [to author Peri E. Arnold's list of

fifteen presidential decisions that shaped America]: the Washington legacy; Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, his belief in "Malice to None" and in a united nation; Teddy Roosevelt and trust-busting; F.D.R. and World War II; Truman and the Korean conflict; Eisenhower's sending federal troops to Little Rock to enforce civil rights; Kennedy's promise to put a man on the moon; and Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Thank you for an educational and interesting magazine.

—Anthony C. Sottile  
Columbia, Pennsylvania

## TEDDY'S FOREST SERVICE?

As a retired forester with thirty-plus-years service with the U.S. Forest Service, I must let you know that President Teddy Roosevelt ["Presidential Profiles," April issue] did not "set up" the Forest Service. It was organized in 1878 in the Department of Agriculture [USDA] and was mainly an extension service for the private sector, including would-be tree farmers. However, Teddy *did* transfer most of the national forest land reserves from the Department of the Interior to the Forest Service, which remains in the USDA today.

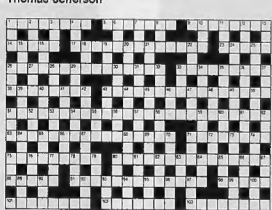
However, I do not fault writer Joseph Gustaitis; I enjoyed his brief synopses so much that I am saving them to let my Thai colleagues enjoy reading about U.S. presidents.

—Robert A. Ralston, Ph.D.  
Bangkok, Thailand

The editors welcome comments from our readers. While we endeavor to publish a representative sampling of this correspondence, we regret that limited space prevents us from printing every letter. Address correspondence to Mailbox, *American History Illustrated*, Box 8200, Harrisburg, PA 17105. ★

## PRESIDENTIAL TRIVIA PUZZLES

Thomas Jefferson



- ACROSS**
1. He was born in \_\_\_\_\_, Virginia on April 13, 1743.
  2. He was elected President of the United States in 1801.
  3. Among his many other activities, he was a successful \_\_\_\_\_.
  4. Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.
  5. He served as \_\_\_\_\_ under John Adams.
  6. When Thomas Jefferson was elected as a member of the \_\_\_\_\_, he was elected as \_\_\_\_\_.
  7. As Governor of the state of Virginia, Jefferson contributed \_\_\_\_\_.
  8. The \_\_\_\_\_ Jefferson established with the establishment of \_\_\_\_\_.
  9. In 1776 he helped the committee that drafted the \_\_\_\_\_.
  10. George Washington was elected President in 1789.
  11. Jefferson was a member of the \_\_\_\_\_.
  12. The Declaration of Independence was signed at \_\_\_\_\_.
  13. The Great Seal of the United States was adopted in 1782.
  14. Being a pioneer, he built a \_\_\_\_\_ that was one of the first in the country.
  15. Jefferson designed \_\_\_\_\_ which has now become the northwest part of the United States.
  16. \_\_\_\_\_ who had a long and distinguished career.
  17. He was a member of the \_\_\_\_\_.
  18. When Jefferson was elected President in 1801, he was the first of the \_\_\_\_\_.
  19. In 1802, during Jefferson's administration, Robert Fulton \_\_\_\_\_.

- DOWN**
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# HISTORY TODAY

## New Home for Photography

### International Museum of Photography Opens New Center

The International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, renowned the world over for the scope and excellence of its photographic collections, moved into new, larger quarters early this year. Since the creation of the museum in 1940, its materials had been housed in the Rochester, New York mansion of photography industry pioneer George Eastman (1854-1932).

The three-level, 73,000-square-foot center, incorporating museum galleries and state-of-the-art archive and research facilities, was built immediately adjacent to the Eastman mansion. Funds for the \$10.5 million complex were raised through volunteer efforts by Rochester citizens. The building program and associated fund-raising began in 1985 after the museum's directors, facing operating deficits and realizing that the existing facilities were no longer adequate for housing and protecting the priceless collections, considered turning them over to the Smithso-

nian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Public areas in the complex include a visitor orientation area and three major exhibit galleries, a motion picture theater, and a museum bookstore. Research and storage facilities include a 25,000-volume library, film and still-photograph study centers, and technology and photo archives.

The museum's holdings—incorporating three major collections acquired between 1938 and 1953—number about three-quarters of a million items, including nearly 600,000 photographic prints, 100,000 negatives, 6,000 motion picture films, and 11,000 cameras and related items of photographic technology. A \$16 million endowment from the Eastman Kodak Company will help fund continuing use and preservation of the collections.

Eastman's palatial thirty-seven-room Georgian mansion, closed for extensive restoration following transfer of the collections to the new center, is scheduled to reopen to the public in January 1990. Museum officials expect up to a half-million visitors a year at the enlarged complex, located at 900 East Avenue in Rochester.

The museum is open 10:00-4:30 Tuesday through Saturday and 1:00-4:30 on Sunday. An admission fee is charged. For more information, phone 716-271-3361. ★





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# AMERICAN GALLERY

## Photography on Exhibit

### On the Art of Fixing a Shadow

The most ambitious pictorial celebration of this sesquicentennial year of photography opened May 7 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Organized jointly by the National Gallery and the Art Institute of Chicago, the exhibition of more than four hundred photographs has since moved on to the Art Institute, where it will show from September 16 through November 26. It will complete its national tour at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from December 21 through February 25, 1990.

*On the Art of Fixing a Shadow: 150 Years of Photography* traces the evolution of photography as a pictorial device from its announcement to the present day. The exhibition demonstrates that while photography was invented in 1839, the medium's ever-changing potential has been rethought and revised countless times, with each improvement to the process and each new cultural mandate. The more than two hundred photographers represented range from nineteenth-century pioneers Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre and William Henry Fox Talbot to twentieth-century masters such as Edward Weston and Ansel Adams.

### American Photography 1839-1900

The International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House will commemorate photography's sesquicentennial with a major exhibition opening on September 29. Drawing heavily on the museum's world-renowned collections, the exhibit will showcase two hundred masterpieces ranging from daguerreotypes, Civil War images, and U.S. Geological survey photographs to Eadweard Muybridge's animal locomotion studies and works of the art photography movement of the 1890s.

After closing at the museum on January 7, 1990, the exhibition will make an eighteen-month national tour, showing at the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco; Terra Museum of American Art in Chicago; Whitney Museum of American Art in Stamford, Connecticut; Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, and Worcester Art Museum in Massachusetts.

### O Say Can You See: American Photographs 1839-1939

Documenting the first century of American photography, this selection of about 125 pictures from a leading private collection will be on exhibit from October 12 through December 12 at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art in Brunswick, Maine. It comprises the first major public showing of materials gathered since 1960 by George R. Reinhart, a preeminent collector of historic images. The exhibition, assembled earlier this year by the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, includes works by such photographers as Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, Timothy O'Sullivan, William Henry Jackson, Alvin Langdon Coburn, and Alfred Stieglitz. ★



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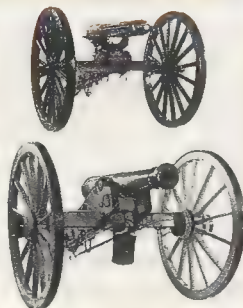
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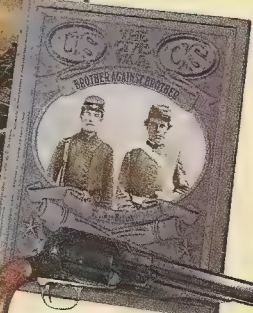
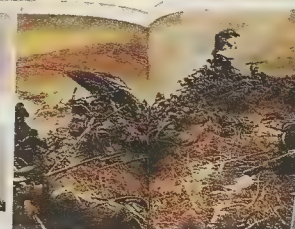
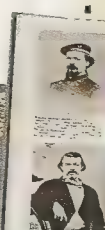
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## Books on Photography

### On the Art of Fixing a Shadow: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Photography

The most lavish of several photographic books published this year, this is the companion volume to the major exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago (page 10). Much more than an exhibition catalog, it features, in addition to 198 color and 252 duotone reproductions of photographs, four in-depth essays by the show's curators. These review the 150-year history of photography, delineate the major photographic movements, and explore the range of experimentation that photographers have achieved.

*Essays by Sarah Greenough, Joel Snyder, David Travis, and Colin Westerbeck (National Gallery of Art / Art Institute of Chicago / Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1989; 510 pages, illustrated, \$75.00 hardcover, \$35.00 paper).*

### Decade by Decade: Twentieth-Century American Photography

Eight essays by eight different critics and historians provide an insightful decade-by-decade overview of twentieth-century American photography, examining the ideas, events, and connections that have shaped the ways photographers see and interpret their world. More than two hundred photographs drawn from the archives of the University of Arizona's Center for Creative Photography in Tucson illustrate the survey.

*Edited by James Enyeart (Center for*

*Creative Photography at the University of Arizona / Little, Brown and Company, 1989; 246 pages, illustrated, \$40.00).*

### O Say Can You See: American Photographs 1839-1939

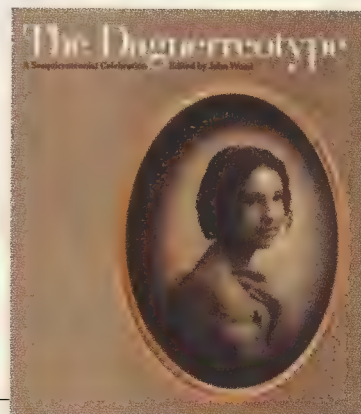
Published in conjunction with an exhibition organized by the Berkshire Museum (page 10), this volume of photographs from the George R. Reinhart collection is notable for the numerous rare views that will be unfamiliar even to serious students of photographic history. The more than one hundred photographs, spanning the first century of American photography, are superbly reproduced in duotone and color.

*by Thomas Weston Fels (The Berkshire Museum / MIT Press, Cambridge, 1989; 143 pages, illustrated, \$50.00).*

### The Daguerreotype: A Sesquicentennial Celebration

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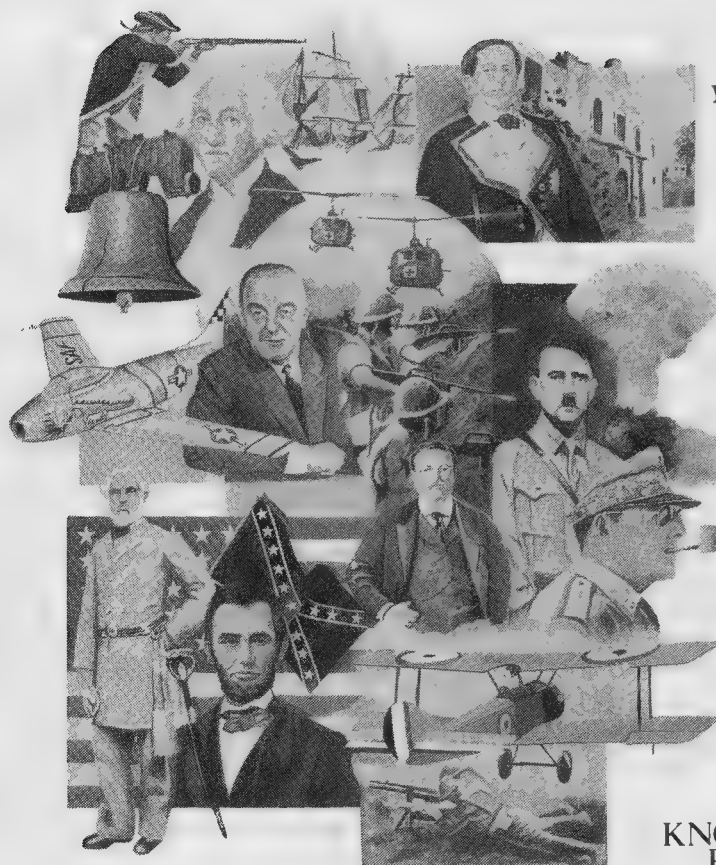
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History can be downright fun, historian John A. Garraty here proves in a lively work that provides readers with concise, humorous entries designed to entertain and stimulate additional interest in a myriad of topics from America's past. Garraty's intent, he explains, is to capsule not things most readers already know nor items appealing to a limited "professorial" audience; rather, he has selected at random a "grab bag" of generously illustrated information—some delightfully irreverent—from colonial times to the 1980 "commando raid" on Iran. Triangular trade, for example, Garraty explains, "took many forms, the most notorious involving the purchase of molasses in the Caribbean, the distilling of the molasses into rum in New England, the exchange of the rum for slaves in West Africa, and the sale of the slaves to the Caribbean sugar planters." What was the origin of the term "Gerrymander"? How about Richard Nixon's "Checkers" speech? How did John Adams acquire the nickname "His Rotundity"? This welcome addition to any library answers these and hundreds of other questions with refreshing wit and sagacity.

*By John A. Garraty (Doubleday, New York City, 1989; 207 pages, illustrated, \$19.95)*

### American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm

While many histories center on the political and economic factors that shaped the United States, this work focuses on technological advances as the driving force of the nation's development during the past one hundred years. Challenging the concept that today's America was shaped primarily by democracy and free enterprise, author Thomas P. Hughes theorizes that inventors, scientists, engineers, and systems builders made modern America,

and that the nation's culture mirrors the values instilled in the machines and processes these men and women created. Americans during the past century, says the author, were exhilarated by technology: "A nation of machine makers and system builders, they became imbued with a drive for order, system, and control." Hughes traces this transformation, characterizing America as the first technological nation.

*By Thomas P. Hughes (Viking Penguin, Inc., New York City, 1989; 472 pages, illustrated, \$24.95)*

### Archaeological Perspectives on the Battle of the Little Bighorn

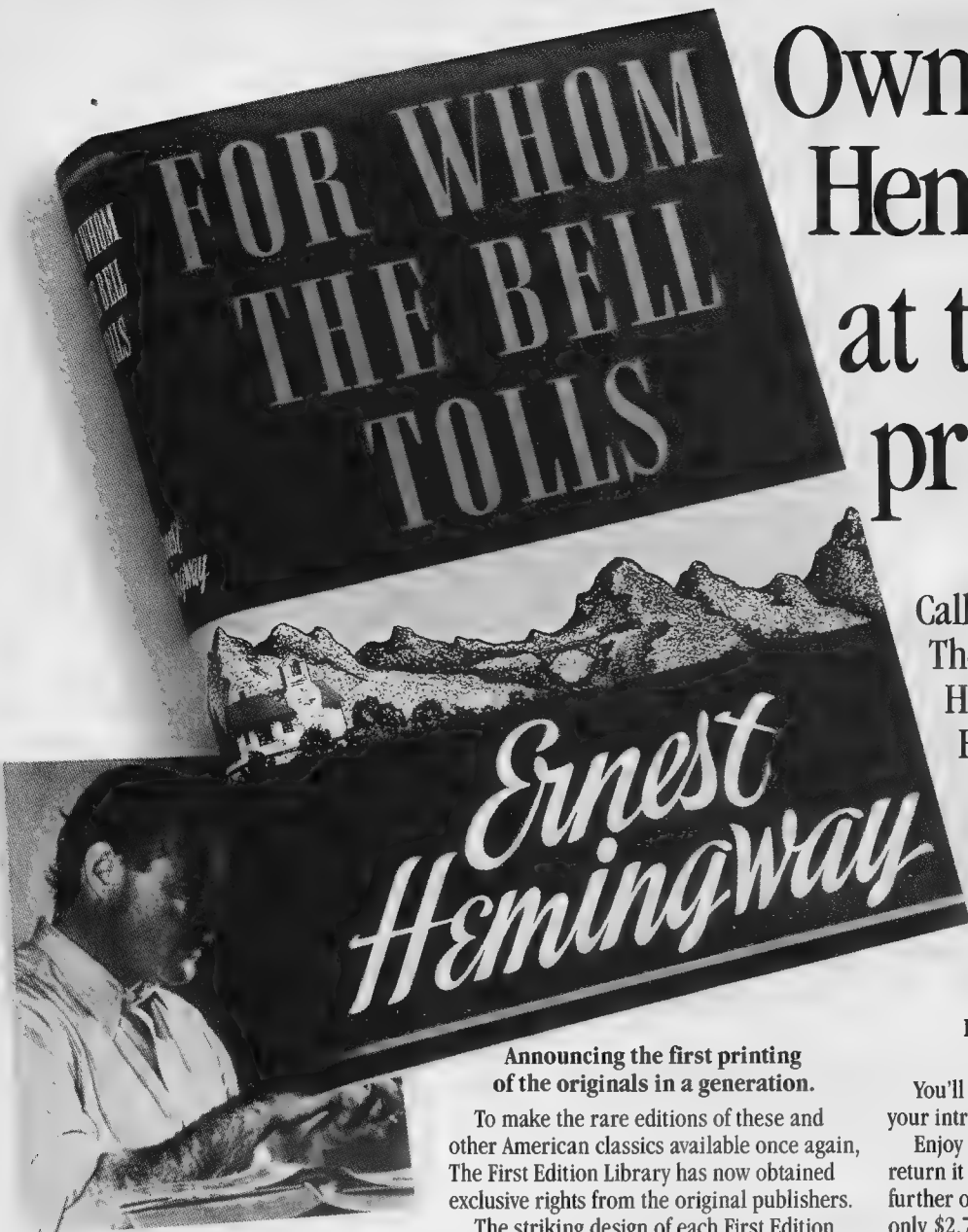
Historical archaeologists Douglas D. Scott, Richard A. Fox, Jr., and Melissa A. Conner here team up with firearms expert Dick Harmon in presenting detailed information—gleaned from analysis of thousands of recently recovered artifacts—about "Custer's Last Stand." In the most controversial episode of the Indian wars, George Armstrong Custer led five companies of the Seventh Cavalry to their deaths on June 25, 1876 in the Battle of the Little Bighorn. None of his men survived, leaving generations of Americans to speculate about what actually happened. Artifacts recovered during an archaeological survey at Montana's Little Bighorn during 1983-84, however, have provided the materials for fresh insights into the battle. This scholarly narrative describes the artifacts; explains how they shed light on battle movements and behavior patterns; evaluates troop movements, positions, and armaments; and suggests where and how many of Custer's 268 troops perished. While the whole story may never be pieced together, this volume answers questions that have baffled historians for years.

*By Douglas D. Scott, Richard A. Fox, Jr., Melissa A. Connor, and Dick Harmon (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman and London, England, 1989; 297 pages, illustrated, \$24.95) ★*



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# SIGHT & SOUND

## Return to Iwo Jima

Called the bloodiest battle in Marine Corps history, the 1945 campaign for the Japanese island of Iwo Jima was one of World War II's most celebrated in terms of its strategic importance. The siege also captured the public's imagination with publication of the famed Joe Rosenthal photograph of Marines raising the American flag atop Iwo's Mount Suribachi, now memorialized by an equally famous bronze statue near Washington, D.C. This film combines historic battle footage with interviews of four former Marines and two surviving Japanese soldiers. Featured is coverage of a 1985 reunion of about three hundred American and Japanese survivors at Iwo, meeting in friendship forty years after they faced each other as enemies. Photographer Rosenthal also tells the real story of the historic flag-raising. Retired Marine Corps Colonel Ed McMahon narrates the documentary.

*ARP Videos, P.O. Box 4617, North Hollywood, California 91607, toll-free 800-VIDEOS-2; VHS or Beta, 60 minutes, \$39.95.*

## The Price of Freedom

For as long as man has been fighting wars, he has been erecting monuments in honor of those who served and died in combat. This film focuses on some of the most notable monuments erected around the world in honor of America's war dead, primarily memorial cemeteries, each with its own special history. The audience sees the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, Gettysburg National Cemetery, and memorial cemeteries in France and Italy where American contributions to freedom are still keenly felt. Period film footage of past wars is accompanied by a dramatic narration that includes brief descriptions of major figures and victories. "We're reminded in the fields of France that tyranny, like history, repeats itself,"

the narrator announces, concluding, "If one is to understand the American experience he would do well to study here among our lost legions overseas. What kind of country were we? What were we seeking? These men have answered with their lives."

*Video Sig, 1030C East Duane Avenue, Sunnyvale, California 94086, toll-free 800-245-6717 or 800-222-2996 in California; VHS or Beta, 60 minutes, \$14.95.*

## UFOS: Are We Alone?

This production, one of the Nova Video Library "Adventures in Science" series, investigates fact and apparent fiction in reported unidentified flying objects (UFOs). Incidents cited range from *Apollo* astronauts shadowed by a mysterious object to an Arizona lumberjack allegedly abducted by aliens (he later passed a lie detector test). Scientists generally disclaim or find reasonable explanations for UFOs, according to this film. Among the culprits: weather balloons and military aircraft—and, in some cases, elaborate hoaxes. The film generally denies the existence of close encounters of the third kind, citing logical explanations for most sightings.

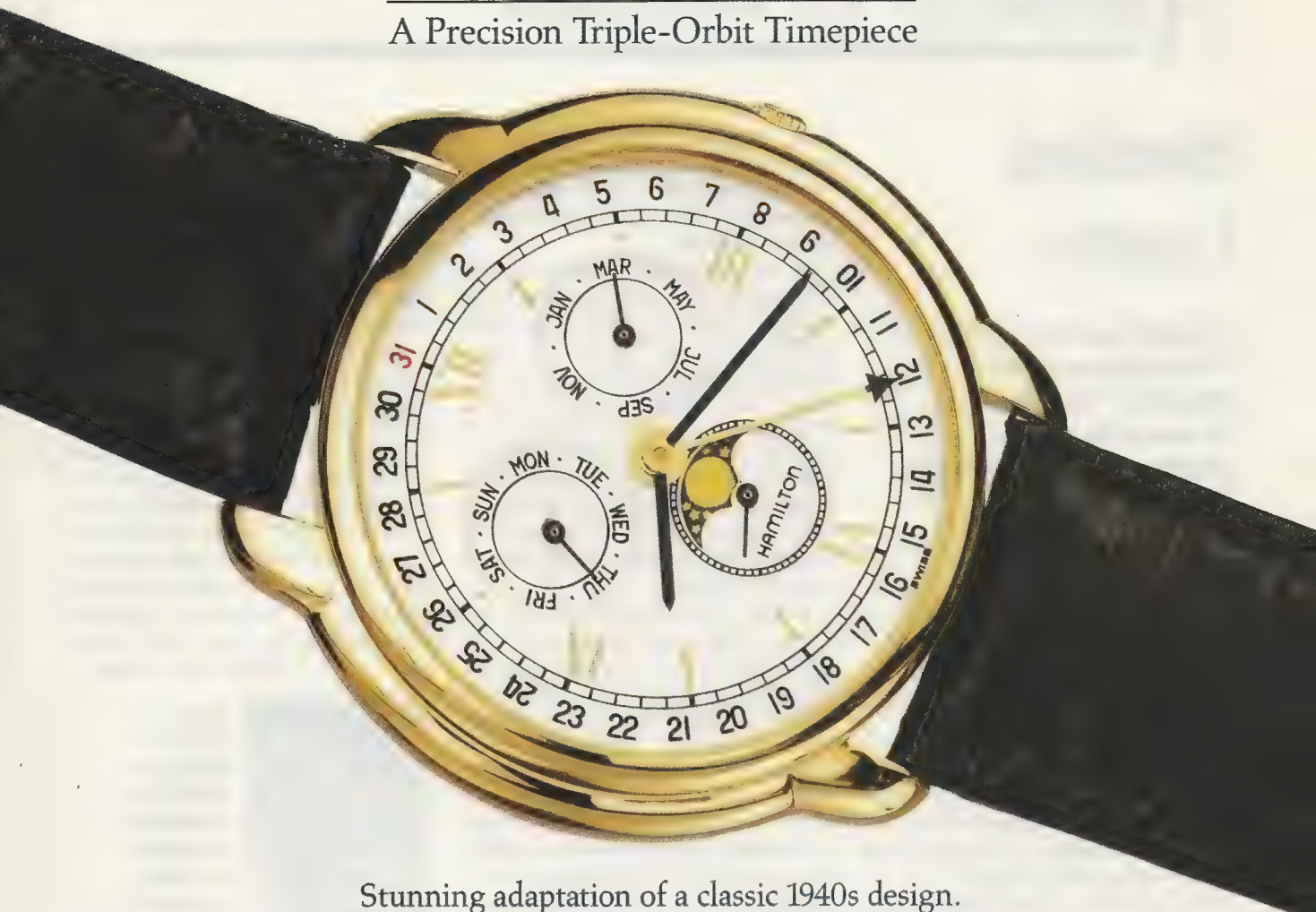
*Vestron Video, P.O. Box 10382, Stamford, Connecticut 06901, toll-free 800-523-5503; VHS or Beta, 60 minutes, \$29.98.*





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# AMERICAN LANDMARKS

## Steinbeck Country

**A half-century after "The Grapes of Wrath," reminders of novelist John Steinbeck can still be found in the California region that inspired his best work.**

By BRIAN MCGINTY

Fifty years ago a great American novel—John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*—went on sale in bookstores across the country. A searing portrait of suffering and privation in the Dust Bowl and Great Depression of the 1930s, *The Grapes of Wrath* stirred the consciences of readers throughout the world and quickly rose to the top of the best-seller lists.

As Americans pause to remember *The Grapes of Wrath* and its vision of struggle and hope, residents of the central California coast where Steinbeck was born and did his best writing are reflecting on the great author's legacy and the celebrity it has brought to the region.

Steinbeck was born in 1902 in Salinas, county seat of Monterey County and marketing center for an incredibly fertile agricultural region often called "the Salad Bowl" of the nation. There he passed his childhood years and attended school, working during the summers in a local sugar refinery. In the early 1920s Steinbeck traveled north to the San Francisco Bay area to attend Stanford University. The future literary giant left Stanford without earning a degree; he lived briefly in

New York and Los Angeles before returning at the beginning of the Great Depression to the Monterey Peninsula, where his family owned a summer cottage.

In the peninsula towns of Monterey and Pacific Grove, Steinbeck developed the writing skills that would win him two of the world's most prestigious literary awards—the Pulitzer Prize in 1940 and the Nobel Prize in 1962—and a reputation as one of America's finest novelists and short story writers. He died in New York City in 1968, mourned by book lovers the world over and by scores of friends and relatives in and around Salinas.

Long before Steinbeck's death, literary critics and mapmakers began referring to Salinas and the Monterey peninsula as "Steinbeck Country." Although Steinbeck was never a "local" writer, he was a writer born of a locale, a writer whose unique inspiration was inseparable from the time and place that nurtured it. That time was, roughly, the two generations between the beginning of the twentieth century and World War II. The place—a section of the central California coast corresponding more or less to the boundaries of Monterey County—was an

incredibly beautiful region of long valleys, wooded hills, and rocky coastline. "It is Steinbeck country," a New York book critic proclaimed around the time *The Grapes of Wrath* was published, "as surely as Hannibal, Missouri, is Mark Twain country."

Despite his close ties with the region that most inspired his writing, Steinbeck was not always popular on his home turf. His depictions of farmers and field hands, bankers and merchants, fishermen and cannery workers who populated "Steinbeck Country" were unrelentingly honest—and occasionally unflattering. There are still some old-timers in Salinas and Monterey who regard the Nobel Prize winner with a mix-

*Continued on page 72*



Salinas, California tributes to writer John Steinbeck include his restored childhood home (below) and statue at the Steinbeck Library (left).



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARIE DIEDERICK



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observe just as they existed during a brief span of seconds several lifetimes ago. Trapped as in amber, they endure in a fragile, mirrorlike amalgam of silver and mercury on a copper plate, in a time machine called a daguerreotype.

Photography is magical. One of mankind's most astonishing and versatile discoveries, it is an art form, an avenue of communication and of personal expression, a scientific tool, a window into unseen and lost worlds. It can convey truth (and just as effectively deceive), can reveal secrets of the past and present, inflame the emotions, touch the heart.

On the following pages we slip back in time to view this remarkable medium's formative decades in America, beginning 150 years ago this September, when photography was still new and miraculous to all who beheld and fell under the spell of its mysterious power.





# SCENES OF "EXQUISITE PERFECTION"

**P**hotography arrived in America on Friday afternoon, September 20, 1839.

That was the day the packet *British Queen* arrived in New York City following a transatlantic voyage. In addition to carrying passengers and cargo from Liverpool, the ship brought European newspapers and brochures describing the almost unbelievable new picture-making process perfected by French painter Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre. Daguerre, an amateur scientist as well as an artist, had revealed the secrets of his remarkable process a month earlier at an August 19 meeting of the French Academy of Sciences.

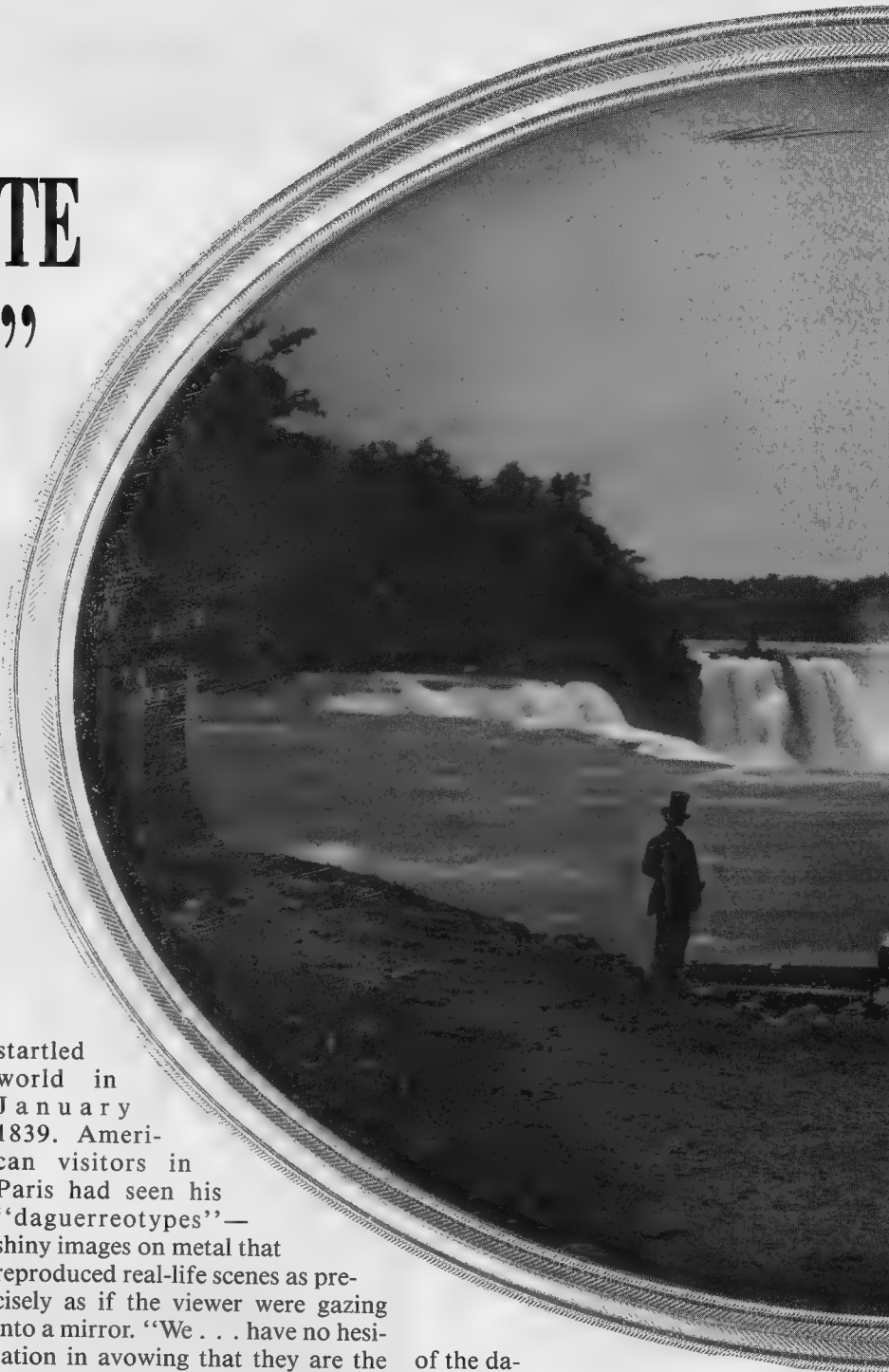
Americans had eagerly awaited for details of the invention since Daguerre announced his discovery to a

startled world in January 1839. American visitors in Paris had seen his "daguerreotypes"—shiny images on metal that reproduced real-life scenes as precisely as if the viewer were gazing into a mirror. "We . . . have no hesitation in avowing that they are the most remarkable objects of curiosity and admiration, in the arts, that we ever beheld," marveled the editor of *The Knickerbocker* magazine. "Their exquisite perfection almost transcends the bounds of sober belief."

American artist and inventor Samuel F.B. Morse, visiting Paris in March 1839 in connection with his telegraph, had even met Daguerre and privately viewed his pictures. "It is one of the most beautiful discoveries of the age," Morse wrote

of the daguerreotype: "... the delineation cannot be conceived. No painting or engraving ever approached it."

Within hours of the *British Queen's* arrival, New Yorkers were rushing to chemists' and instrument makers' shops, hastily assembling the components needed to duplicate Daguerre's discovery. Seven days later W.D. Seager, an Englishman living in New York, made what is believed to be the first American photograph—a view (now lost) of



The inventor in his invention: a daguerreotype of Daguerre.



**Platt D. Babbit, a pioneer photographer of tourists at Niagara Falls, made the daguerreotype below in about 1855.**



**The oldest photograph of a human being: a self-portrait by Robert Cornelius (1839).**

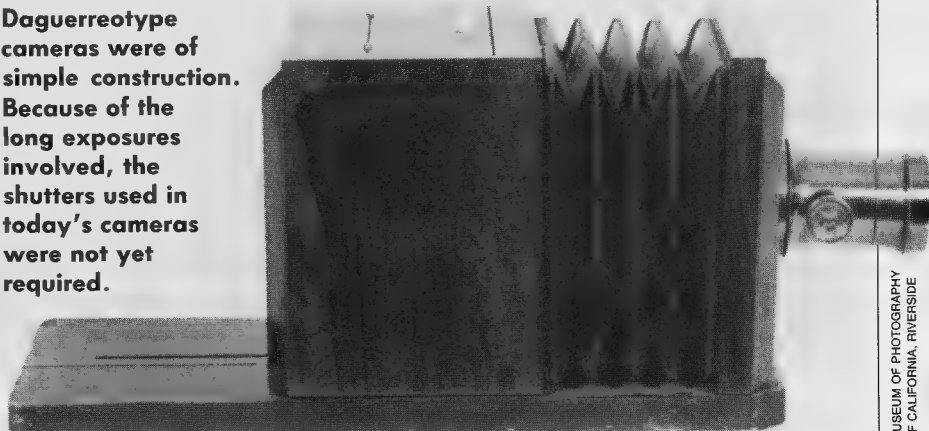


**The oldest American daguerreotype: Philadelphia in 1839 by Joseph Saxton.**

St. Paul's church in Manhattan.

By the end of October Americans from Boston to Philadelphia were mastering the process. Among the first of these was Morse, who in turn instructed others as well as becoming one of the country's first portrait photographers. Although Morse's connection with the daguerreotype was as a pioneer user and advocate rather than as an inventor, his early involvement has led to him often being called "the father of American photography."

**Daguerreotype cameras were of simple construction. Because of the long exposures involved, the shutters used in today's cameras were not yet required.**



COURTESY OF MRS. JOSEPH CARSON

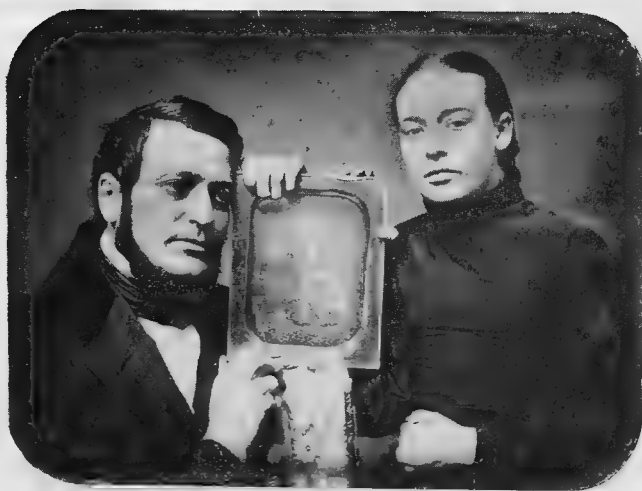
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# IMAGES IN QUICKSILVER

**T**he daguerreotype combined new discoveries with scientific principles known for years. Artists had used the camera obscura—a box and lens combination that cast an image of the scene before it onto a sheet of glass—as a drawing aid since the seventeenth century. And scientists had long been aware that some substances, after being treated with certain chemicals, darkened



A daguerreotype within a daguerreotype (circa 1850).



A daguerreotype of the "Tioga"—perhaps the earliest photograph showing an American locomotive.

when exposed to light.

Although Daguerre was the first to devise a practical photographic process, another Frenchman—Joseph Nicéphore Niepce—had already created the world's first photographs. Niepce, who as a lithographer was familiar with light-sensitive compounds, succeeded in fixing camera-obscura images on sensitized pewter plates as early as 1826. But many hours of exposure were required to make his "heliographs" or "sun pictures."

Daguerre learned of Niepce's experiments, and in 1829 the two formed a partnership. The lithographer died four years later; Daguerre finally perfected his photographic process in 1837.

The procedure that Daguerre pioneered was exacting and, because of the substances used, somewhat hazardous. The daguerreotype itself was a silver-plated sheet of copper. Before use, the photographer sensitized the plate to light by exposing it to iodine vapors in a small box, creating a silver iodide compound on the polished silver. Placing the plate in the camera, he then made the exposure by removing the lens cap for between several minutes and half an hour. Then he returned the plate to another box where fumes from heated mercury developed the latent image, depositing a thin coating of quicksilver on those areas chemically transformed by exposure to light. Finally he "fixed" the image with a "hypo" solution and mounted the daguerreotype in a protective glass and metal frame.

The definition of daguerreotype images was limited only by the quality of the camera lens, and the pictures boasted a brilliance unmatched by any subsequent process. But daguerreotypes also had some serious limitations. The mirrorlike picture had to be viewed at a precise angle; otherwise reflected glare overwhelmed it. Also, daguerreotype images were reversed from left-to-right, a characteristic particularly bothersome in scenes showing signs and type. And unlike most processes used today, daguerreotypes could not be easily duplicated because no separate negative existed from which to produce additional pictures.



A "candid" daguerreotype by Albert Southworth and Josiah Hawes.



Glare overwhelms the daguerreotype's mirrorlike image if the picture is not held at precisely the correct viewing angle.





# PORTRAITS BY THE MILLIONS

**T**he first daguerreotypists were limited in their choice of subjects by the long exposure time—usually at least twenty minutes—needed to register an image on the silver-coated plate. Portraiture was next to impossible. But within two years after the daguerreotype was introduced to the United States a series of improvements radically reduced the necessary exposure times.

One breakthrough was the discovery that treating the unexposed daguerreotype plate with chlorine or bromine fumes greatly increased its sensitivity to light. Another significant advance was the introduction of new lenses with improved light-gathering power. In a well-lighted rooftop studio, an exposure time of as little as fifteen to twenty seconds soon became the norm.

Before the end of 1840, daguerreotype portrait galleries were in business in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. By the middle of the decade nearly every eastern town of any size boasted at least one; New York City had more than seventy.

Daguerreotype portraits were available in several sizes, based on the standard whole “plate”—a copper and silver sheet measuring about 6½ by 8½ inches. Most customers chose quarter- or sixth-plate views; these were often tinted in lifelike colors by skilled artists. Such a likeness cost about two dollars, placing it beyond the reach of many Americans. But such was the enthusiasm for daguerreotypes among those who could afford them that by the mid-1850s galleries produced about three million portraits annually.



A rare early studio view showing a portrait photographer at work.



The identities of the men and women in these daguerreotypes are, unfortunately, no longer known.



# THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE

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William Shew photographed this San Francisco street in 1852.

**P**ortrait photographers were not the only ones who benefited from the technical innovations that soon improved the daguerreotype process. Those who attempted to make scenic photographs found that a minimum of five minutes was required to expose a plate, even in bright sunlight. But within a few years "instantaneous" views—with exposures of as little as a second—were attainable outdoors.

Although American photographers made thousands of outdoor pictures with the daguerreotype camera, surviving examples are relatively uncommon today. Such views

are valued by collectors for their rarity and by historians for what they reveal about mid-nineteenth-century life and culture. They are the earliest authentic pictorial documents of the American scene.

Unfortunately, the daguerreotype record of the American landscape is quite uneven. Numerous views of Niagara Falls, for example, have been preserved, while daguerreotypes showing New York City are almost nonexistent. Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago are well documented, however, as are San Francisco and the California gold fields.



THE BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY

Some of the most interesting daguerreotype scenes are panoramas made up of several individual plates. Outstanding among these is an eight-picture series of the Cincinnati waterfront made in 1848 by Charles Fontayne and William Southgate Porter; two of the plates appear below. Other existing panoramas show Niagara Falls and San Francisco.

Long-lost views are continually coming to light: in 1972, for example, a daguerreotype (right) of the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C., previously known from lithographic copies, turned up at a California flea market. Made in 1846 by photographer John Plumbe, this picture is the oldest known photograph of the historic landmark. Many other significant daguerreotypes undoubtedly await discovery; among those that collectors and historians hope to find someday is a cache of three hundred California views by noted daguerreotypist Robert H. Vance, dating from 1849-50 and last seen in St. Louis in 1856.



**An 1846 daguerreotype (above) by John Plumbe is the oldest known photograph of the U.S. Capitol.**

**In 1848 daguerreotypists Charles Fontayne and William Southgate Porter made a superb eight-plate panorama of Cincinnati, Ohio; two of the series appear below.**





# NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE

**A**t about the same time that Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre was perfecting the daguerreotype, a multi-talented Englishman named William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877) was independently devising his own method of painting pictures with light. Like Daguerre, Talbot used a camera obscura to focus images onto light-sensitive material. But Talbot sought to capture the images on chemically treated sheets of paper instead of metal. In August 1835, using a tiny camera and paper sensitized with silver nitrate, he succeeded in creating a translucent, postage-stamp-sized image of a library window at Lacock Abbey, his country home. It was the world's first photographic negative.

Although by January 1839 Talbot had not yet perfected his invention, that month's announcement of Daguerre's discovery prompted the Englishman to describe his own method of "photogenic drawing" before the Royal Society. Aided by Sir John Herschel, Talbot significantly improved his process over the next two years, reducing average exposure times from the half-hour first required to about thirty seconds. In 1844 he published *The Pencil of Nature*, the first book to be illustrated with a number of photographs.

Talbot called his pictures "calotypes" (from Greek for "beautiful") or "Talbotypes." To make a positive print, he placed a second sheet of chemically treated paper in contact with the paper negative and exposed both to sunlight. Natural imperfections in the translucent negative gave the pictures a softer, less distinct appearance than daguerreotype images. But Talbot's process had one great advantage: unlike the daguerreotype, which could not be

easily duplicated, the calotype negative could be used to produce a virtually unlimited number of prints.

Using Talbot's process, Scottish photographers Robert Adamson and David Octavius Hill achieved remarkable artistic results. And in France, an inventor named Hippolyte Bayard (1801-1887) produced beautiful paper photographs using his own formula. Bayard's pictures, though similar in appearance to calotypes, were direct positives made by a reversal process requiring no intermediate negative.

Despite its success in Europe, the calotype generated little enthusiasm among American photographers. Most preferred the sharper definition attainable with the daguerreotype, and because Talbot had patented his invention, licensing restrictions were a deterrent. Nevertheless, the calotype held great significance for the future of photography around the world: the negative/positive process it pioneered laid the foundation for most of the systems employed today.

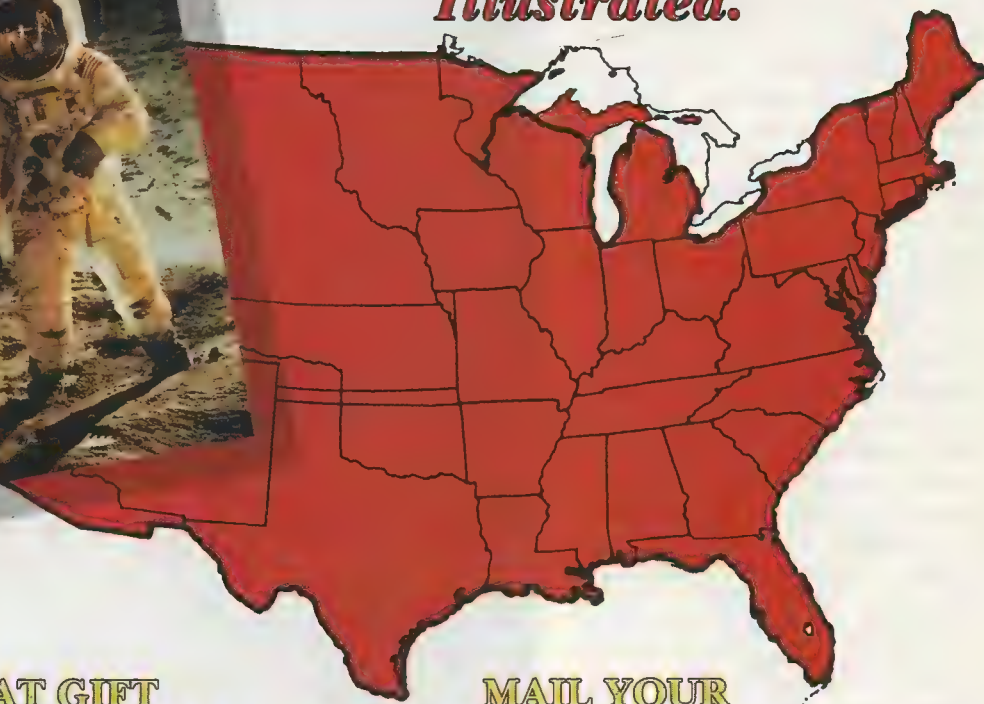


**Philadelphia photographers William and Frederick Langenheim made this calotype view of the city's Merchant's Exchange in 1849.**

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# MASTERS OF THE DAGUERRETYPE

**P**erhaps one thousand daguerreotypists maintained portrait galleries in the United States during photography's first decade. Many portrait photographers produced indifferent results and some were incompetent, but a few elevated their craft to an art form. Preeminent among the daguerreotype galleries was that of Albert Sands Southworth (1811-1894) and Josiah Johnson Hawes (1808-1901) of Boston. Their studio was the most prestigious such establishment in America from about 1843 to 1862.

Southworth, a former pharmacist, had learned daguerreotyping from Samuel F.B. Morse in 1840; Hawes, who studied photography at about the same time, had previously been a painter. Unlike the majority of gallery owners, who had assistants do the actual work, Southworth and Hawes took pride in personally posing their sitters. Avoiding stereotyped poses and lighting, they were unequalled in their ability to capture the essence and vigor of their subjects. "The artist, even in photography," noted Southworth, "must go beyond discovery and knowledge of facts; he must create and invent truths. . . . He should not only be familiar with nature and her philosophy, but he should be informed as to the principles which govern or influence human actions, and the causes which affect and mark human character."

Southworth and Hawes's clientele included such luminaries as John Quincy Adams, Zachary Taylor, Daniel Webster, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. At a time when other galleries charged two dollars for a portrait, they were able to command more than twice as much.

Emerging as artists of the first

rank at nearly the inception of photography, Southworth and Hawes have been matched by few portrait photographers since and surpassed by none. Their legacy of 1,500 images, including studies of many of mid-nineteenth-century America's leading political, social, and artistic figures, is the largest and finest such group of daguerreotypes to survive.

**These whole-plate daguerreotypes of now-unknown subjects are typical of the superb portraits made by Boston photographers Albert Sands Southworth and Josiah Johnson Hawes.**



BOTH PAGES: INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY AT GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE







# FORESHADOWING PHOTOGRAPHY'S FUTURE

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**T**he first photographs were straightforward scenic views and portraits. But inventive photographers soon began to find new uses for the camera. Some surviving daguerreotypes, for example, contain scenes foreshadowing the future field of photojournalism. In Pawtucket, Rhode Island, a now-unknown photographer recorded the spectacular aftermath (above) of an August 12, 1853 head-on collision on the Providence and Worcester Railroad. Other news-oriented daguerreotypes dating from the same year include a view of a burning mill in Oswego, New York, and one showing a doomed boatman stranded in midstream above Niagara Falls. Because almost half a century more would pass before introduction of the half-tone printing process, early journal-



An 1853 daguerreotype of a train wreck near Pawtucket, Rhode Island (opposite) was among the first news-oriented photographs.

An unknown daguerreotypist made the first war views in Saltillo, Mexico (left) during the Mexican War of 1846-47.

John Collins Warren (below) and other physicians at Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital pioneered in medical applications for photography, recording abnormal physical conditions as well as some of the first operations using ether (below left).



istic use of photographs was limited to their employment as guides for artists making woodcut illustrations.

Saltillo, Mexico provided the setting for the first war photographs when an anonymous cameraman made a half-dozen daguerreotypes showing American troops occupying that town during the Mexican

War. The pictures show no action; one typical scene made during the winter of 1846-47 portrays General John Ellis Wool and his staff (top).

Physicians at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston were among the first to recognize that photography had potential scientific applications. During the mid-1840s surgeon John Collins Warren (above

right) and other doctors employed daguerreotypists to make visual records of patients afflicted with tumors and other disorders as well as to document the results of corrective surgery. A view made in the hospital's surgical amphitheater (above left) documents one of the first occasions on which ether was employed as an anesthetic.



# GUNCOTTON AND ETHER

**P**hotographers familiar with William Henry Fox Talbot's calotype process—and with the limitations of the paper negative—realized that a transparent material like glass could provide a superior base for light-sensitive emulsions. But finding a reliable method of bonding an emulsion to glass eluded researchers until Englishman Frederick Scott Archer (1813-1857) introduced the collodian, or “wet plate” process, in 1851.

Wet plate photography proved more versatile and practical than any method before it. Its most significant advantage was that any number of high-quality paper prints could be made from a single glass negative. The collodian process became the predominant means of picture-making during the late 1850s and reigned supreme until the widespread adoption of “dry plate” emulsions during the 1880s.

The procedure for picture-taking with a wet-plate outfit required considerable patience and skill. The

photographer set up his heavy view camera on a tripod, composing and focusing the scene on the ground-glass back with the aid of a dark-cloth. If he was away from his studio, he also erected a small tent for use as a makeshift darkroom. Some professionals traveled with permanent darkrooms on horse-drawn wagons.

Working in the dim light and chemical-laden atmosphere of the dark-tent, the photographer carefully poured a solution of collodian—a syrupy mixture of guncotton (cellulose nitrate), alcohol, and ether—onto the glass sheet, allowed this bonding agent to dry just enough to form a thin film, and then sensitized the emulsion by immersing the plate in a bath of silver nitrate. He then fitted the plate into a light-tight holder, placed it in the camera, and made his exposure, usually by removing a cap from the lens. The exposure of several seconds was an estimate based on the photographer's past experience with

lighting conditions.

The cameraman immediately returned the exposed plate to his dark-tent, developed it in a bath of pyrogalllic acid, and rinsed it in clean water. He then immersed the negative in a hypo bath to remove undissolved silver salts, again rinsed it in water, dried it over a candle flame, and finally applied a protective coating of varnish.

The term “wet plate” derived from the requirement that the photographer expose and develop the negative soon after sensitizing it. As soon as the emulsion dried (a period that varied from a few minutes to about half an hour, depending upon the temperature and humidity), the negative lost most of its sensitivity to light and became useless.

**T**he wet plate process had significant drawbacks—including the inconvenient necessity of transporting boxes of heavy glass plates, noxious chemicals, and a portable darkroom to wherever one wanted to obtain a photograph. However, it made excellent pictures. The stable base provided by the glass plate, the collodian emulsion's fine grain, and the fact that the camera was invariably mounted on a tripod all contributed to creating extremely sharp images.

The illustration at left is an actual-size reproduction of half of a wet-plate stereograph made in Leavenworth, Kansas in 1867. It is one of thousands of such images preserved by Chicago photographer and collector David R. Phillips, who, using modern-day photographic technology, extracts remarkable amounts of detail from the plates. The full-page illustration opposite, enlarged from a segment of the one at left, reveals a group of printing company employees assembled outside of their Delaware Street office.

**Below: Kansas in 1867—a contact print from a wet plate negative.**

**Opposite: a segment (enlarged about ten times) from the image below.**



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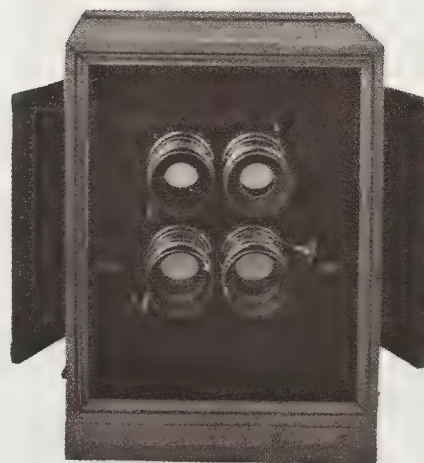
# CARTES DE VISITE

In 1854 Frenchman Adolphe Eugène Disdéri patented a four-lensed portrait camera capable of producing multiple images on a single glass plate negative. With this camera a studio photographer could provide sitters with prints of a number of identical or different poses at a far lower cost than if he used separate negatives.

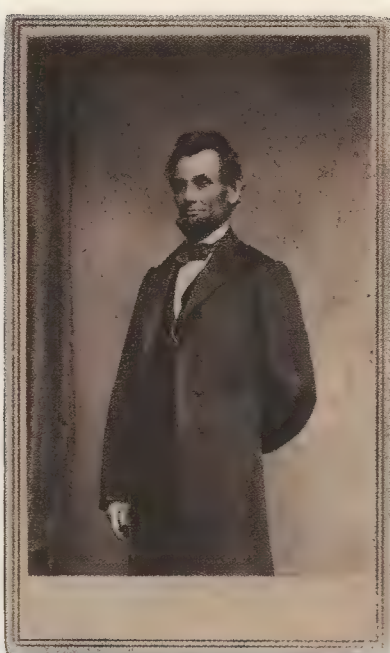
The advent of the *carte de visite*, as the visiting-card-sized paper print was generally called in the United States and Europe, revolutionized the commercial portrait industry. For the first time ordinary people could afford photographic likenesses in quantity not only for themselves but to give to family and friends. A near-mania for card photographs developed during the early 1860s, with hundreds of studios turning out millions of images. For more than a decade the *carte de visite* remained the most popular type of photograph in America.

The now-ubiquitous photograph album was a direct outgrowth of the fad, as manufacturers introduced ornate albums with slotted window openings in the pages for displaying the quantities of cards that every family accumulated. Enthusiasts collected not only pictures of ac-

quaintances, but purchased card photos of public figures and celebrities. *Carte de visite* portraits of royalty, in fact, were directly responsible for igniting interest in card photographs. Attention had been first drawn to Disdéri's innovation in 1859 when Napoleon III halted his army, enroute to Italy, outside the photographer's studio while he had his portrait made. International interest blossomed the following year when American photographer J.E. Mayall published a collection of *carte de visite* photographs of England's Queen Victoria and the royal family.



**When used with a movable plate-holder, the four-lens carte de visite camera above could register as many as eight separate images on a single negative. The small album at right holds a single card photograph on each page; larger ones usually contained four per page.**



Clockwise from upper left: A typical card photograph illustrating a standard pose and studio backdrop; a Mathew Brady portrait of Abraham Lincoln; a Civil War view of a Union sailor; an early example of sex in advertising; and three extraordinary people from P.T. Barnum's museum.





# THE AMBROTYPE

**B**y the mid-1850s the daguerreotype portrait began to lose favor not only to collodian wet-plate images printed on paper but to other, more economical methods of photography. One of these, introduced to America from England in 1854 and known as the ambrotype (a word derived from the Greek "ambrotos," signifying "immortal"), was a variation of the collodian wet-plate process.

The ambrotype was essentially an underexposed collodian negative on a sheet of glass. When viewed in front of a white background, the newly exposed and developed plate



COLLECTION OF ED HOLM, COPY PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN HUNT



**When an ambrotype's black backing—usually varnish or velvet cloth—is removed (opposite), the picture's true identity as a glass negative is revealed.**

presented a conventional negative image. But when the glass was backed by a piece of black velvet or with dark varnish, all of the tonal values in the picture instantly reversed and a positive image appeared. To protect the emulsion, a second piece of glass was usually sandwiched against the first with balsam glue; the photograph was

then mounted in a brass frame and fiber decorative case similar to those used for daguerreotypes.

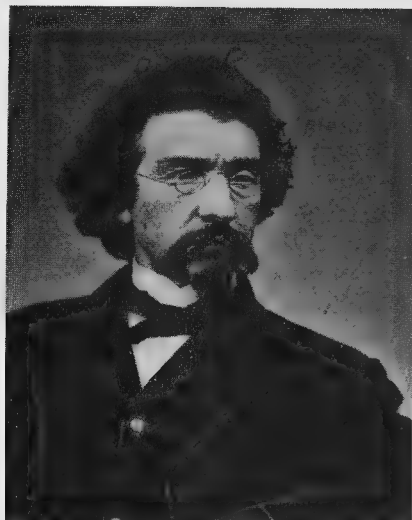
Like the daguerreotype, the ambrotype was a one-of-a-kind image; because the negative itself formed the finished picture, additional copies could not be made. Ambrotype pictures lacked the visual brilliance and contrast of the daguerreotype,

but at the same time viewers were spared the glare inherent in the older process. Probably the chief attraction of the ambrotype was its low cost—a fraction of that of a daguerreotype. With a portrait available for as little as a quarter, the ambrotype brought possession of a photographic likeness within reach of the average citizen.



# PHOTOGRAPH BY BRADY

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



**A**mong those who received instruction on making daguerreotypes from Samuel F.B. Morse in 1840 was a nearsighted but energetic young artist named Mathew B. Brady. Brady soon abandoned painting in favor of photography and in 1844 opened a daguerreotype studio in New York City.

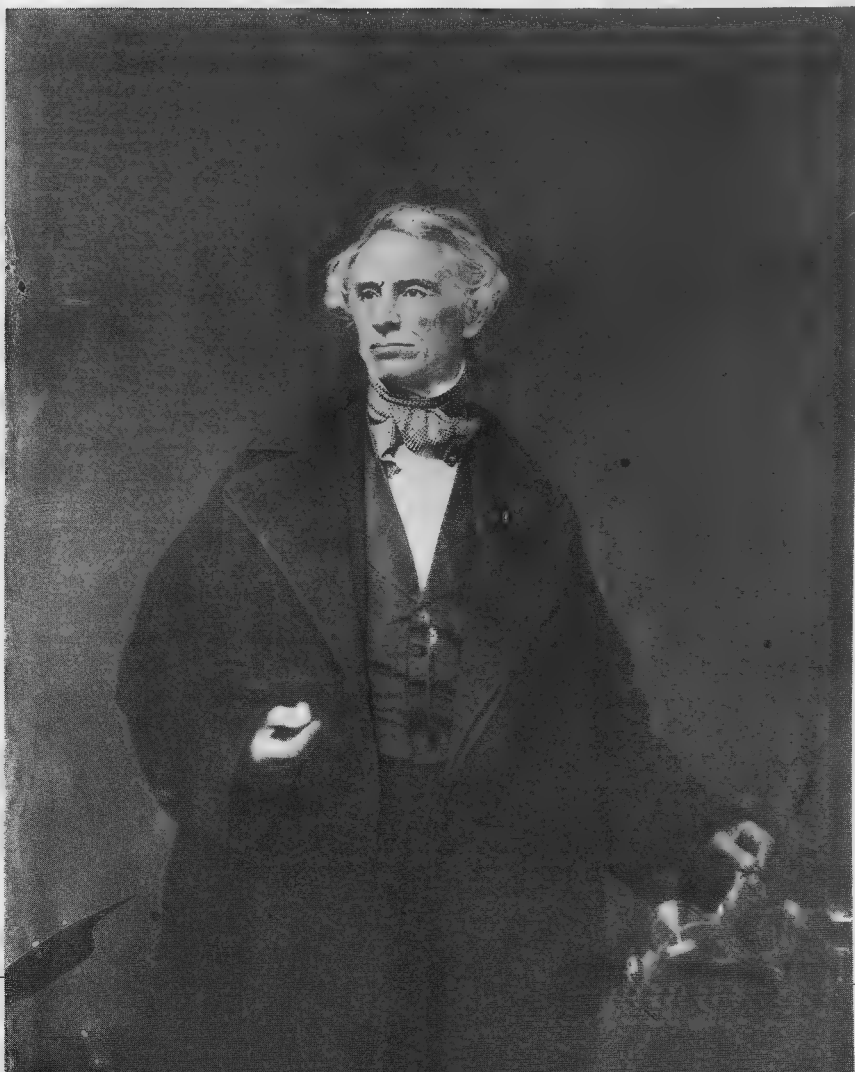
Brady (1823-1896) proved to be a consummate portraitist as well as a skillful entrepreneur, and leading actors, scientists, writers, and other celebrities (including visiting European royalty) flocked to his gallery. His success dictated successive moves to larger and more lavish quarters, and in 1858 Brady opened

a branch studio in Washington, D.C., where his work had already attained great popularity among politicians and statesmen. By this time he stood unchallenged as the most renowned and successful portrait photographer in America.

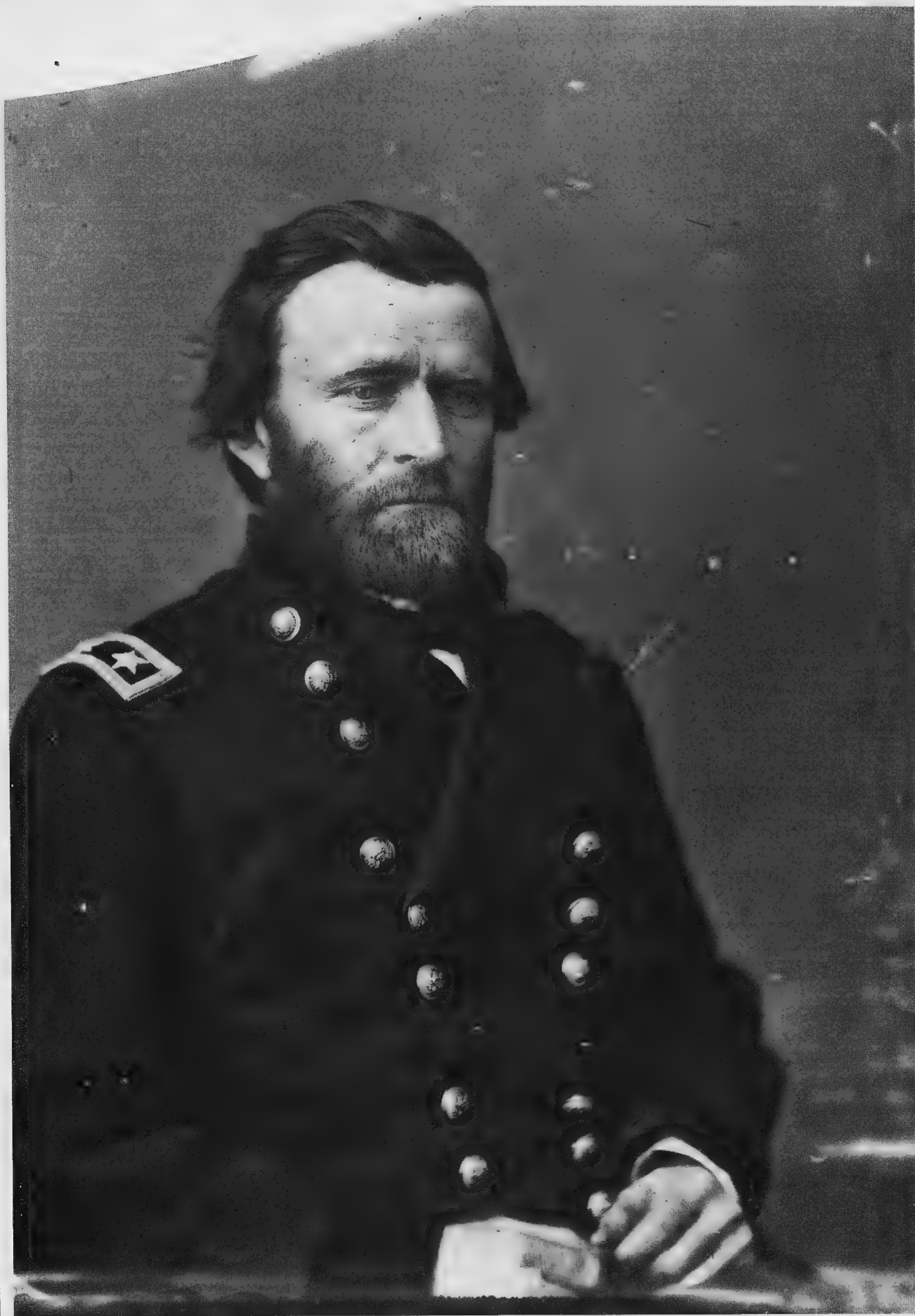
Brady embraced the latest technical innovations—including the *carte de visite* and collodian processes—as they were introduced. Wet-plate images from his gallery (three appear on these pages) rank among the best studio portraits ever made.

Brady's weak eyesight failed more with each passing year, and he soon turned over most actual camera work to skilled assistants. Simultaneously his inner vision of photography's—and his own—roles in history grew more sharply defined. As early as 1845 Brady instituted a deliberate program of assembling portraits of all of the notable figures of his day, and in 1850 he published the first of a projected series of portfolios picturing illustrious Americans. Brady succeeded in portraying nearly every president and ex-president of the era, and the words "Photograph by Brady" became the most esteemed credit line in America. In 1862 Abraham Lincoln paid the photographer the ultimate compliment. Referring to a Brady portrait of Lincoln that had been widely circulated when the country lawyer first achieved national attention, he noted that "Brady and the Cooper Union speech made me President of the United States."

**Portraits from the Brady Studio:  
Brady himself (upper left), Samuel  
F.B. Morse (left), and General  
Ulysses S. Grant.**



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# THE THIRD DIMENSION



**With twin lenses mounted about two and one-half inches apart; stereo cameras made two nearly identical images on a single negative.**

**C**reating an illusion of depth in pictures was attempted even before the invention of photography. The principle that the brain visualizes the third dimension by combining and interpreting the different images seen by the left and right eyes was well understood by early nineteenth-century scientists. In 1832 English physicist Charles Wheatstone simulated binocular vision using an optical device he called a stereoscope to view pairs of drawings showing objects as seen from slightly varying angles.

In 1849 another Englishman, David Brewster, applied Wheatstone's concept to photography. The results were startling. "The magic result of the resolution of two plain pictures into one, possessing to the eye the most positive solidity, is so striking," noted an early observer, "that it appears to be a deception of the senses." Scenes that appeared flat and uninteresting as simple photographs assumed an uncanny sense of reality when pictured and viewed in stereo.

Stereo photography achieved great popularity in England and Europe, and by the late 1850s it took hold in the United States. Physician and essayist Oliver Wendell Holmes was America's leading booster of the process, praising it in magazine articles, coining the name "stereograph" for stereo cards, and inventing a simple hand-held viewer that eventually became a fixture in almost every family parlor. Manufacturers such as E. & H.T. Anthony, Underwood & Underwood, and the Keystone View Company sold tens of millions of stereographs and sent corps of photographers around the world in search of natural and manmade wonders for their files.

During an era when few people had the opportunity to travel far from home and when publications did not yet contain halftone illustrations, the stereoscope provided millions of armchair travelers with countless hours of entertainment and their first real look at the world beyond their horizon. More than a passing fad, stereo photography retained its popularity until well after the turn of the century.

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1617. LOOKING DOWN THE TRAIL, from the Cap of Liberty.

Typical stereo views: State Street in Boston, Niagara Falls, and California's Yosemite Valley.



# THE HUMBLE TINTYPE

In 1856 Hamilton Smith, an Ohio college chemistry and physics professor, patented a new type of photograph he called the "melainotype." Later the process would be better known under two other names—"ferrotype" and "tintype."

In principle, the tintype was a blend of several other photographic processes. It was a picture not on tin but on a thin sheet of iron covered with black lacquer. Before exposing the plate, the photographer coated its surface with a sensitized collodian solution much as he would a glass-plate negative. When exposed and developed, the collodian layer registered as a positive image on the black background.

Like the daguerreotype and ambrotype, the tintype was a one-of-a-kind picture that could not be reproduced in quantity as could an image on a glass-plate negative. Tintype photographers got around this limitation, however, by using multi-lens cameras, registering as many as thirty-six images on a single plate.

Possessing little contrast, tintype pictures appeared dull and were generally inferior to other processes. But they were cheap, the prints were durable, and a portrait could be ready for the customer in minutes. Ordinary people loved them. A visit to a high-class studio for a paper photograph was usually reserved for a special occasion, but at six pictures for a quarter, almost any excuse was adequate for a stop at a tintype gallery.

Outlasting most other early processes, the tintype retained its popularity through the end of the century. Catching people in their most relaxed and happy moods, surviving tintypes provide us with some of nineteenth-century America's most charming images.



**Inexpensive ferrotype portraits were within reach of even the most humble of citizens (above). Many tintypes depicted the lighter side of life (left and opposite).**





# THE FACE OF WAR

**This Confederate soldier, who fell at Petersburg in April 1865, was among the Civil War's last casualties.**

\$100,000 in the endeavor.

Working under difficult conditions—usually within range of enemy rifle and cannon shot—the photographers made thousands of exposures on their stereo and view cameras, developing the negatives in portable darkrooms the troops dubbed “What Is It?” wagons. The pictures—many of the best of them taken by Brady assistants Alexander



Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1865, by L. J. F. Brady & Co. in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the U.S. for the Southern District of New York

Let him who wishes to know what war is,” wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes of photographs showing the Antietam battlefield, “look at this series of illustrations.” During the Civil War, such pictures carried visual evidence of the horrors of combat into American homes for the first time.

Mathew B. Brady, the photographer most closely associated with the Civil War, actually took few of the pictures. His more significant contribution was foreseeing the importance of compiling a pictorial record and actually undertaking and overseeing to completion such a project.

In July 1861 Brady did attempt to personally cover the battle of Bull Run. But instead of photographing a glorious Union victory, he found his wagon caught in a confused retreat: “We . . . expected to be in Richmond next day,” he recalled thirty years later, “but it was not so, and our apparatus was a good deal

damaged on the way back to Washington.”

Thereafter Brady hired other men to do most of his picture-taking. During the course of the next four years as many as twenty Brady photographers were continuously in the field, and Brady invested more than

Gardner and Timothy O’Sullivan—carried the war to civilians with an immediacy never before experienced. The collodian plates were too slow to capture the action of battle, but short exposures were not needed to picture the rows of bloated corpses that littered the fields after each encounter.

In 1866 Alexander Gardner published a *Photographic Sketch Book* of war views. It was not a success. Brady himself met financial disaster, losing everything including his precious negatives, because people wanted to forget, not remember.

“It is so nearly like visiting the battlefields to look over these views,” wrote Holmes, “that all the emotions excited by the actual sight of the stained and sordid scene, strewn with rags and wrecks, came back to us, and we buried them in the recesses of our cabinet as we would have buried the mutilated remains of the dead they too vividly represented.”



**A Union cavalryman, circa 1861.**



One of the war's rare candid views, made by Timothy O'Sullivan, catches Union general Ulysses S. Grant (seated on church pew near trees) writing a dispatch at Massaponax Church, Virginia, in May 1864.



# EXPLORING THE FRONTIER

**S**oon after photography arrived in America, the camera began to accompany some of the earliest government expeditions to survey the vast tracts of prairie, mountains, and desert stretching from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. Expedition leader John C. Frémont carried a daguerreotype outfit when he mapped the Oregon Trail in 1842, but his lack of experience in its use resulted in failure. In 1853 Frémont tried again, employing a daguerreo-

typist on an expedition across the Rocky Mountains. Another daguerreotypist accompanied Isaac Stevens when his party surveyed a route to the Pacific Northwest the same year. Both photographers obtained pictures, but their work is now lost.

The period following the Civil War marked the apex of expedition photography. Some of the best frontier photographers were men who had learned their craft during the

war. Outstanding among these was Timothy O'Sullivan (1840-82), former assistant to Mathew Brady. Between 1867 and 1875 O'Sullivan accompanied or led several expeditions to the West, including one under Clarence King along the fortieth parallel and others under Lieutenant George M. Wheeler to the Southwest. O'Sullivan obtained superb views of desert scenes, the Colorado River, and Indian ruins.

Equaling O'Sullivan in talent and perseverance was William H. Jackson (1843-1942), the longest-lived and probably the greatest of America's frontier photographers. As official photographer for the U.S. Geological Survey during 1870-79, Jackson accompanied a series of expeditions to the Rocky Mountains. His pictures of Yellowstone's wonders in 1878 were influential in leading Congress to establish a national park there.

Often working with giant 20- by 24-inch wet plate cameras and equipment that required entire mule trains to carry, Jackson and O'Sullivan repeatedly surmounted some of the most difficult working conditions ever to face American photographers.

On the West Coast, meanwhile, several commercial photographers obtained significant artistic views of natural wonders in California, the Oregon Country, and Alaska. Notable among these were Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904), better remembered today for his photographic studies of motion, and Carleton E. Watkins (1829-1916), celebrated for his mammoth-plate views of the Yosemite Valley.

**William Henry Jackson**  
photographed Yellowstone (left);  
**Timothy O'Sullivan** the Southwest  
(right).







# THE PACIFIC RAILROAD

**W**ith the Civil War over, the manpower and resources finally became available for nineteenth-century America's single most ambitious industrial challenge—completion of the long-awaited transcontinental railroad. Railroad executives, aware of the value of publicity in attracting settlers to the vast lands the companies would receive for building the road, and mindful that they were embarking on a history-making venture, saw to it that photographers recorded the work.

Outstanding among the railroad photographers was Andrew J. Russell (1830-1902), former official photographer for the construction corps of U.S. military railroads during the Civil War. Hired by Union Pacific vice president Thomas C. Durant in 1868, Russell accompanied the graders, tunnel diggers, and tracklayers as they raced westward through Wyoming toward the Great Basin. Using collodian plates in a 10- by 13-inch camera, Russell photographed laborers and engineers, locomotives and trestles, and the

spectacular and often forbidding landscape through which the newly-laid track passed. When Union Pacific and Central Pacific executives drove the golden spike at Promontory Point, Utah on May 10, 1869, Russell was there to record the moment for history. Two hundred of Russell's original glass plates, preserved in California's Oakland Museum, provide us with some of the finest extant images of Manifest Destiny and the drive westward.

At the Central Pacific end of the project, Sacramento photographer



Andrew J. Russell photographed Union Pacific construction at Green River, Wyoming in 1868.



Alfred A. Hart documented Central Pacific construction (above and below).

Alfred A. Hart made hundreds of construction stereographs as that line, carved out by some fifty thousand Chinese laborers, crept painfully over the Sierra Nevada and then sped eastward across the desert toward Promontory Summit.

Later some of America's best scenic photographers served as publicity photographers for railroads. F. Jay Haynes, working out of his special Palace Studio Car, operated for twenty years on the Northern Pacific line. William Henry Jackson, who had also photographed Union Pacific construction in 1869, made many spectacular views of Colorado railroads during the 1880s and '90s. And at the turn of the century Cheyenne photographer J.E. Stimson documented the extensive rebuilding of the by-then deteriorating Union Pacific right-of-way through Wyoming.





# EXPANDING VISIONS

**E**ven before photography arrived in America, Samuel F. B. Morse realized that it held great potential for practical and scientific applications. "You perceive how this discovery is, therefore, about to open a new field of research," Morse wrote from Paris in 1839, noting that he had seen a daguerreotype plate picturing the most minute details of a spider. "The naturalist is to have a new kingdom to explore, as much beyond the microscope as the microscope is beyond the human eye."

As early as 1840 John W. Draper of Philadelphia anticipated the use of photography in astronomy when he attempted to make daguerreotypes of the moon. During the 1860s his son, Dr. Henry Draper, produced

spectacular wet plate lunar photographs (above) with a telescope of his own making. John Adams Whipple of Boston conducted similar experiments, producing hundreds of daguerreotype and wet plate views of the sun, moon, major planets, and brighter stars. But the full-flowering of astrophotography had to await the advent of sensitive

**Henry Draper photographed the moon (above) in about 1863.**

gelatine dry plate negatives in the 1880s.

In 1860 a former Whipple associate—James Wallace Black—pioneered photography *from* the skies, making America's first successful aerial photographs. After initial efforts to photograph Providence, Rhode Island from a balloon, Black exposed the plate reproduced on the opposite page and several others over Boston on October 13, portraying the city, in the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, "as the eagle and wild goose see it."

Far to the west, survey photographer Timothy O'Sullivan made some of the earliest artificially lighted photographs. Descending into the fabled Comstock Mine at Virginia City, Nevada in July 1867, O'Sullivan risked fire and explosion to obtain wet plate views illuminated by burning magnesium wire (left). Flashlight photography would become more practical two decades later with the advent of magnesium flash powder.

Photography also found application in law enforcement; the view opposite, made at the Denver, Colorado police headquarters, shows the department's rogues' gallery which, when this picture was taken in 1900, numbered some two thousand photographs of criminals and law offenders.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

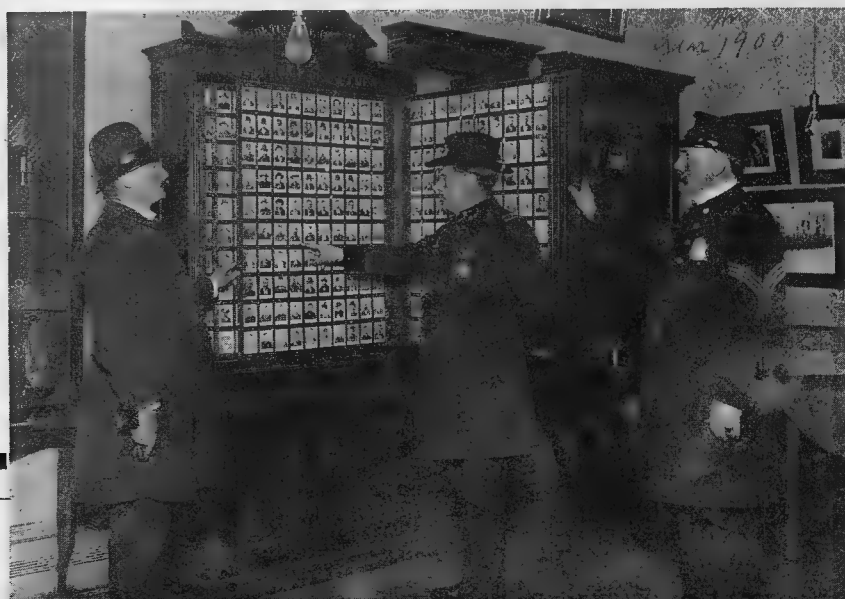


**Timothy O'Sullivan pictured a Virginia City mine in 1867.**



**James Wallace Black** photographed Boston from a balloon (left) in 1860, two years after a French photographer achieved the same feat over Paris.

By the turn of the century several U.S. law enforcement agencies, including the Denver, Colorado police department (right), were using files of "mug shots" to track known law offenders.







"Watching the Herd" by  
Roland Reed (Piegan,  
circa 1912).

# THE VANISHING RACE



**B**y the time photography arrived in America in 1839, most native Americans east of the Mississippi River had already been displaced from their ancestral lands, their ancient cultures irretrievably altered or lost. But as the frontier pushed on across the vast expanses of the West during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the camera was there not only to record the Indian as he had existed for hundreds of years but also to document his defeat and near-elimination.

Indians regarded the photographer with awe—and sometimes with pleasure. The official report for an 1853 government railroad survey to

the Pacific Northwest, for example, noted that when expedition artist John Mix Stanley "commenced taking daguerreotypes of the Indians . . . they were delighted and astonished to see their likeness produced by direct action of the sun. They worshiped the sun, and they considered Mr. Stanley was inspired by their divinity, and he thus became in their eyes a great medicine man." Other native Americans, having learned to mistrust the white man in the face of relentless pressures from his advancing civilization, viewed the camera and its magic with suspicion. Nevertheless, dozens of frontier photographers—including Wil-



**Opposite page, bottom:**  
Tosh-a-wah, chief of the  
Penateka Comanches, by  
William S. Soule (circa  
1869-74).

**Left: Black Eagle,**  
Assiniboin warrior, by  
Edward S. Curtis (circa  
1910).

**Below: "The Moose Call"**  
by Roland Reed (Ojibway,  
circa 1910).

KRAMER GALLERY, INC., ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA



liam S. Soule in Oklahoma, L.A. Huffman in the Montana Territory, and Adam Clark Vroman in the Southwest—compiled remarkable records of the western tribes.

As the century neared its end and the Indian's subjugation grew near-complete, the white man's perception of his former adversary changed. Gaining a new respect for traditional Indian values and sensing that all traces of that ancient culture might soon vanish beyond retrieval, some photographers, including Roland Reed and Edward S. Curtis, mounted intensive efforts to record what was left of the Indian's world before it was too late.





## GELATINE AND GLASS

**F**rustrated by the limitations of the collodian process, photographers repeatedly attempted to devise a "dry plate" negative that did not have to be exposed and developed within minutes after sensitization. They achieved little success until 1871, when English physician Richard L. Maddox tried an emulsion consisting of gelatine impregnated with silver-bromide salts. Although initially less sensitive than collodian negatives, the gelatine plates worked. Over the next several years various experimenters in England and the United States modified Maddox's process, and by the early 1880s a number of manufacturers were producing gelatine "dry plates" commercially—including a young Rochester, New York bookkeeper and amateur photographer

**Improved technology enabled Arnold Genthe to unobtrusively photograph San Francisco's Chinatown (above).**

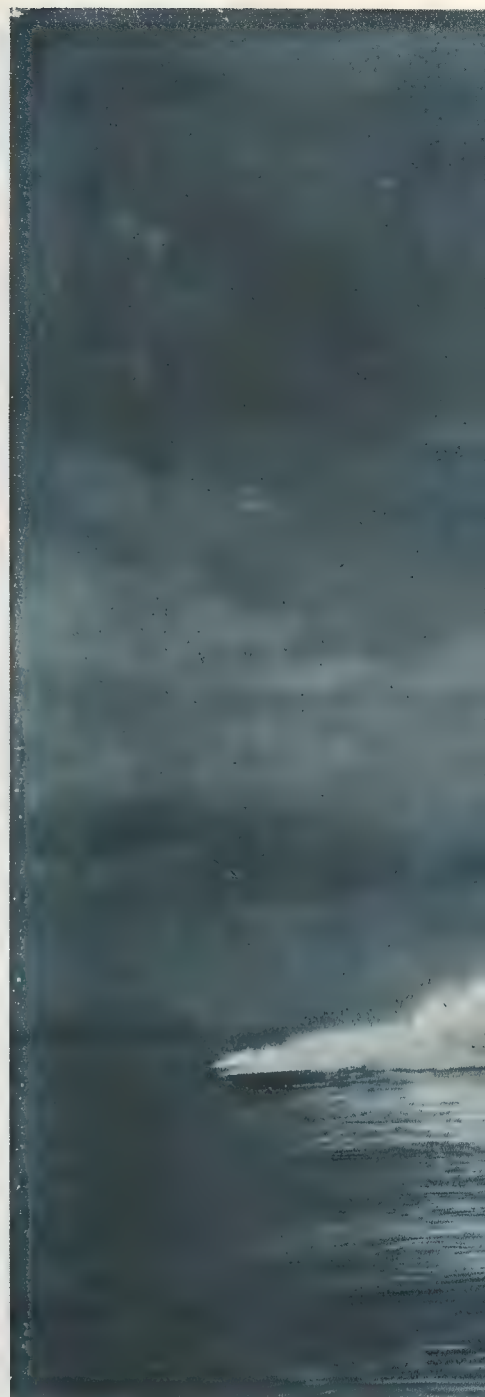
named George Eastman.

Unlike wet plate negatives, gelatine plates could be stored for months before use, and after exposure they could be developed at leisure. Moreover, improvements in dry plate technology made them so sensitive to light that use of hand-held cameras became possible.

Some companies also began to provide developing and printing services, giving birth to the photofinishing industry. With the technical aspects of picture-making vastly simplified, thousands of new amateurs joined the photographic ranks.

The dry plate process changed the way cameramen worked. Commercial photographers, freed from the tyranny of the portable darkroom, ventured into areas and circumstances previously inaccessible. Maritime photographer Enrique Muller, for example, working from the deck of a tugboat, was able to go miles out to sea to photograph the U.S. Navy's new battleship *Connecticut* during her engineering trials

off the Maine coast (above). And amateurs, working with the high-speed plates and hand-held shoebox-sized "detective cameras," began to obtain genuine "candid" views of the world around them. Using such a camera, California photographer Arnold Genthe wandered through the streets of San Francisco's pre-earthquake Chinatown and portrayed the throngs there without arousing the suspicion and ire of his subjects (upper left).





Working with a gelatine dry plate in a large view camera, maritime photographer Enrique Muller made this dramatic view of the battleship "Connecticut" (above) off the Maine coast. Available commercially, dry plates also attracted many amateurs to photography (left).



# PORTRAITS OF AN ERA

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**B**y the late nineteenth-century, virtually every main street in America had at least one portrait gallery. Although portraiture was the bread-and-butter work that the photographers relied on to pay their bills, many of these men and women also found time and opportunity to compile an informal pictorial record of the people, businesses, and activities that characterized their home regions. Sadly, of the millions of such images they created, only a fraction survive today. Those we do have testify not only of the values that Americans across the country once shared but also to the rich diversity of the American scene.

One perhaps typical small-town photographer was Charles R. Pratsch (1857-1937). Son of a hotel owner in the Grays Harbor area of western Washington, Pratsch paid

three hundred dollars to a professional photographer in 1885-86 to learn the craft, then established his own studio in Aberdeen, a major lumber mill and shipbuilding center. His surviving glass plate negatives, preserved at Washington State University, are among the best extant pictorial records of pioneer life in this roughhewn wilderness region of homesteaders, loggers, mill hands, and sailors.

Another regional photographer was George Edward Anderson (1860-1928). A former apprentice to well-known Mormon photographer Charles R. Savage, Anderson set up his first studio in Salt Lake City at age seventeen. For the next half-century, sometimes maintaining a studio in Springville and at other times working as a traveling photographer, Anderson pictured the peo-

**Charles R. Pratsch photographed an Aberdeen, Washington bucking competition (opposite); George Edward Anderson pictured the Utah pioneers (above).**

ple and activities of Utah as well as scenes relating to the history of the Mormon church. Unfortunately, Anderson was a far better cameraman than businessman, and his recurrent financial straits estranged him from his more practical wife. "Like other photographers and artists around the turn of the century," notes his biographer Rell G. Francis, "Anderson felt a compulsion to record his times. This he accomplished. Surely George Edward Anderson will be remembered as the village photographer who was in the business for the love of art, history, and his religion."



# TIME AND MOTION

**Coleman Sellers (below) poses with his "kinematoscope," a stereo viewer the Philadelphian devised to create the visual illusion of motion.**

**A**s early as 1824 European scientists were investigating the optical characteristics of objects in motion. By mid-century several popular parlor toys created primitive animation using mirrors, slotted discs or rotating cylinders, and sequential drawings of human figures and animals.

The earliest known precursor to the motion picture that actually used photography was a device created by Coleman Sellers (1827-1907), a mechanical engineer and instructor at the Franklin Institute School in Philadelphia. In about 1860 Sellers made several stereographic photo sequences. One sequence showed his wife fanning herself and another pictured his two sons rocking in a chair and hammering a nail. Sellers attached the stereo cards to a paddle-wheel mechanism in a viewer he called a "kinematoscope" (near right). When the observer rotated the wheel with a

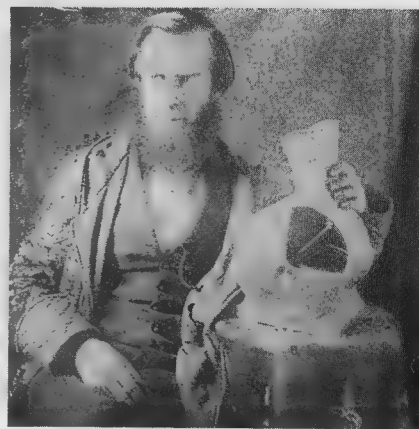
**Using banks of cameras, Eadweard Muybridge made thousands of photographs of animals and people in motion; the sequence below shows the photographer himself walking up and down an inclined plane.**

knob, the sequence realistically recreated the illusion of motion—and in three dimensions! The inventor did not follow up on his opportunity; having satisfied his curiosity, he moved on to other fields.

The most celebrated experiments involving photography and motion were those by Eadweard Muybridge (1830-1904), a California photographer engaged by railroad magnate Leland Stanford to investigate the gaits of a horse. The actions of a trotting or galloping horse had long been the source of controversy as well as the bane of painters, because the motion of the fast-moving animal's legs was too rapid for the human eye and brain to comprehend. Muybridge's initial attempts to photograph horses in 1872 were followed by more sophisticated experiments five years later; finally a sequence of exposures, in which a galloping horse broke threads to trip high-speed shutters on twelve cameras, proved conclusively that all four of the horse's hooves leave the ground. Thus inspired, Muybridge made and published hundreds of photographic sequences of animals and humans in action. In 1880 he also succeeded in projecting motion picture sequences on a screen using a special magic lantern he called the "zoopraxiscope."

Muybridge's experiments encouraged Pennsylvania artist Thomas

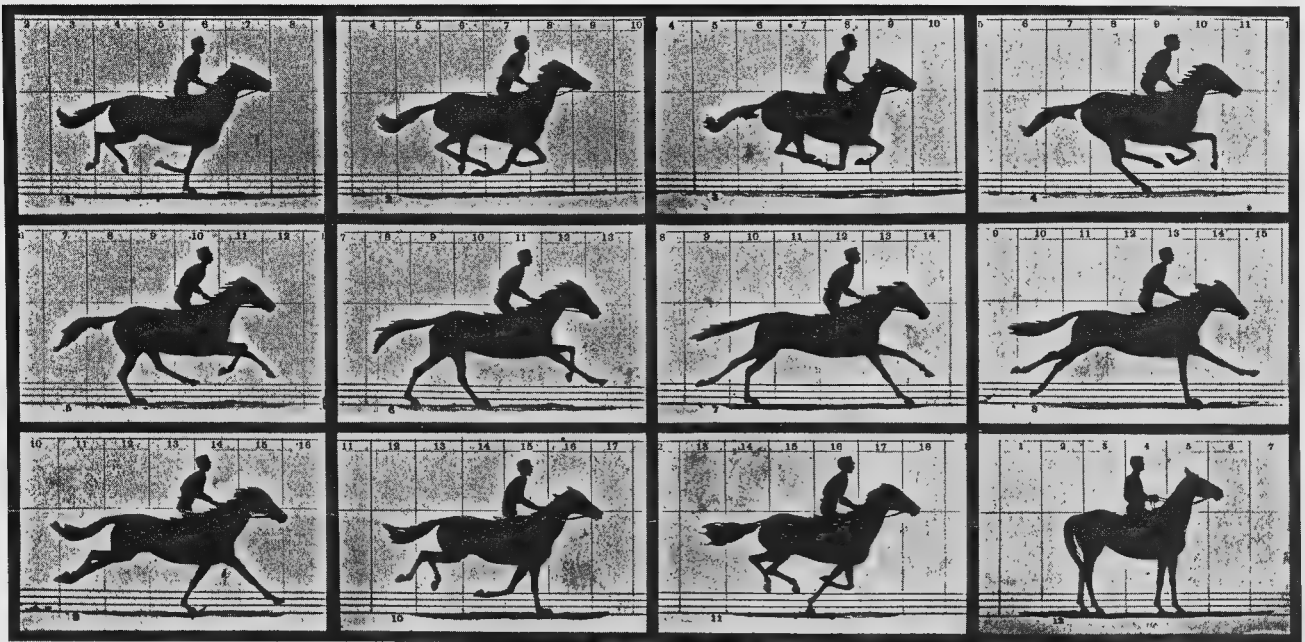
Eakins (1844-1916) to undertake similar studies. While Muybridge's sequences utilized a series of cameras taking individual exposures, Eakins used a single camera with a rotating disc in place of the shutter. Repeatedly passing across the lens, an opening in the disc registered successive images on a single negative.



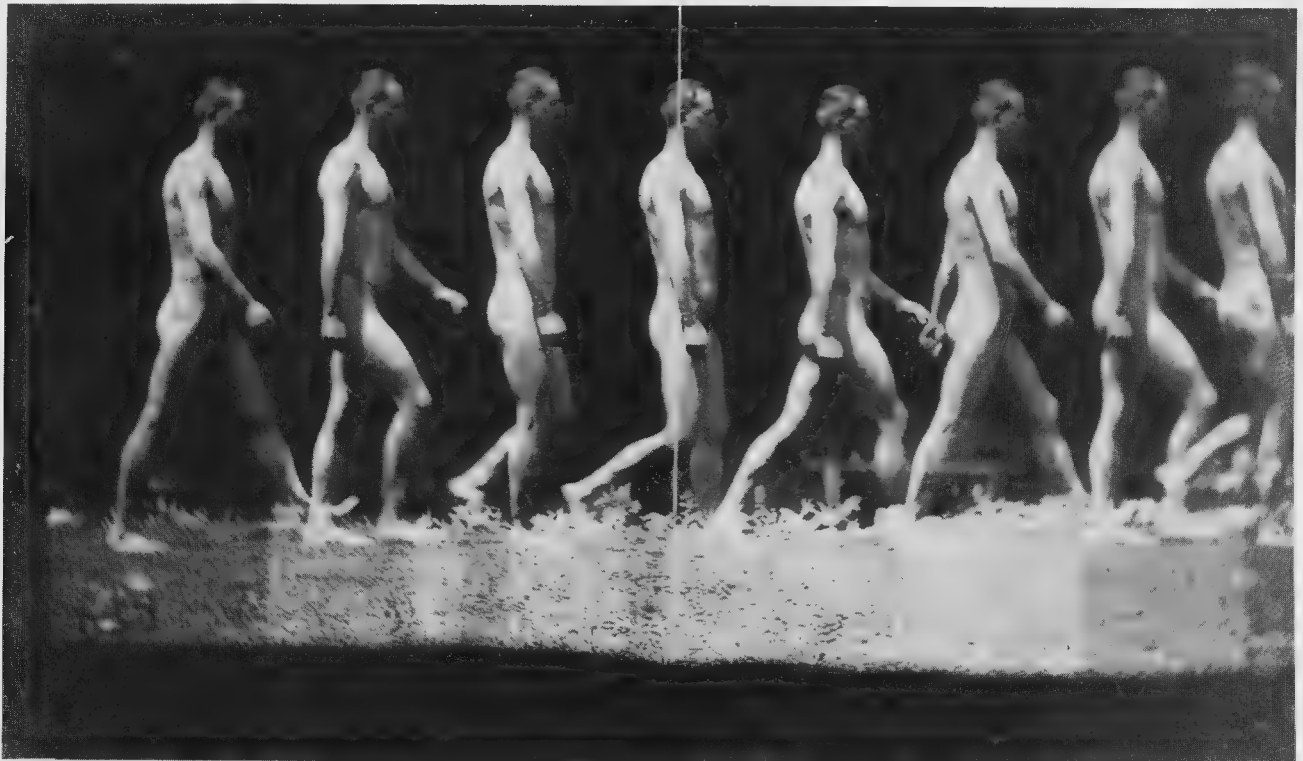
Muybridge's work came to the attention of Thomas Edison, who used some of what he learned from those experiments in designing his kinetoscope (a peep-show type of viewer using sprocketed strip film produced by George Eastman) in 1891. That invention, followed by French inventors Louis and August Lumière's cinématographe (a projector) in 1895, finally helped to open the door to practical commercial motion pictures.



COURTESY OF MRS. JOSEPH CARSON AND WILLIAM WELLING



With rows of cameras and high-speed exposures, Eadweard Muybridge obtained the first photos showing a horse's gait.



Thomas Eakins studied human motion using a single camera with a rotating shield in front of the lens.





# PHOTOGRAPHY FOR EVERYMAN

**A** amateur photography entered a new epoch in the summer of 1888, when workers at George Eastman's little factory in Rochester, New York began turning out a simple but revolutionary instrument called the "Kodak." A hand-held box camera with a fixed-focus lens and single-speed shutter, the Kodak embodied a totally fresh concept. The twenty-five-dollar camera came factory loaded with "film" for one hundred pictures. To use the camera, the photographer simply pointed it toward the subject and tripped the shutter, then advanced the film and reset the mechanism. After completing the roll, the owner mailed the camera and its contents



back to Eastman's factory, where technicians developed the negatives and printed the circular images (opposite and below). For an additional ten dollars the Eastman factory reloaded the camera with film for another hundred exposures.

Eastman's remarkable camera was the product of nearly a decade of methodical research and invention as the visionary entrepreneur pursued his quest to simplify picture-taking. In 1881 Eastman began manufacturing dry plate negatives to his own formula. By 1885 he was marketing rolls of sensitized paper that, mounted in an ingenious roll holder, could be used in an ordinary plate-back camera. Eastman's 1888 Kodak featured a further significant development: a gelatine negative bonded to a paper roll base that could be stripped away during processing.

"Anybody can use it," noted the inventor of his easy-to-operate camera: "Everybody will use it." Eastman's statement was prophetic. The Kodak was an immediate sensation, bringing photography within reach of legions of new enthusiasts and vastly expanding the photographic industry.

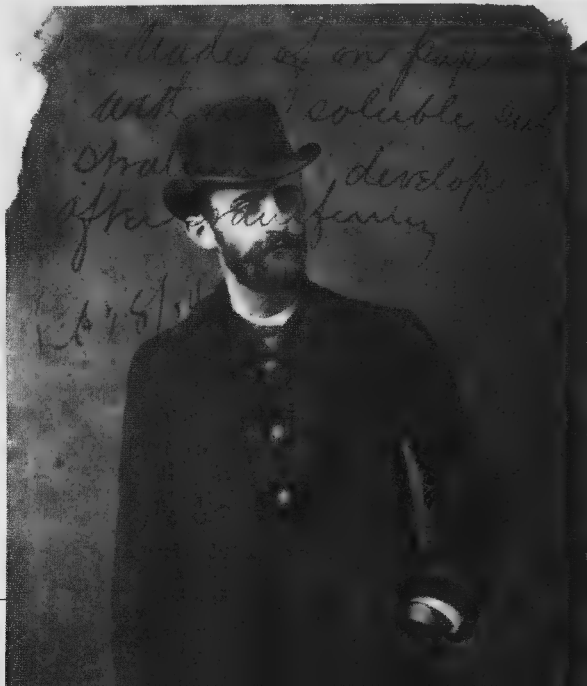
Eastman soon introduced dozens of additional innovations—including transparent celluloid film in 1889, the compact "Pocket Kodak" in 1895, and the enormously popular one-dollar "Brownie" in 1900. More than a century later, billions of photographs taken annually by hundreds of millions of amateurs testify to the timeless value of George Eastman's credo: "You press the button, we do the rest."

**The Kodak box camera (above left) reduced photography to its basic elements.**



George Eastman's flexible gelatine film (below) greatly simplified photography during the 1880s.

The first Kodaks produced circular images (above and opposite). Rectangular and square prints (below) followed.



EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

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# TALENTED AMATEURS

**T**he great technological advances of the 1880s demystified and simplified photography, bringing excellence in picture-making within reach of thousands of amateurs. The most talented of these enthusiasts, often documenting aspects of society overlooked by professional photographers, created bodies of work that today rank among the finest pictorial records of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American life.

One such exceptional amateur was Elizabeth Alice Austen (1866-1952), member of a well-to-do fam-



BOTH ALICE AUSTEN COLLECTION, STATEN ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ily in Staten Island, New York. Austen, who had learned the basics of photography at the age of ten from a sea-captain uncle, made seven thousand glass-plate images of her family, friends, and Staten Island society over a forty-year period between the 1870s and 1920s.

Austen never married, and she was eventually reduced to poverty

**Alice Austen**  
photographed the good life in  
Staten Island, New York.



BOTH: CULVER PICTURES, NEW YORK CITY

by the stock market crash. In 1950 the by-then infirm woman was rescued from the poorhouse when, through the efforts of interested friends, enough funds were raised through publication of her long-forgotten pictures to provide private care. Her unique pictorial record of a quieter and perhaps happier era is preserved in the archives of the Staten Island Historical Society.

At about the same time that Austen was photographing lawn-tennis parties and bicycle outings, Chansonetta Stanley Emmons (1858-1937) was picturing rural activities in northern New England. Using dry-plate negatives made by her twin brothers—inventors of the Stanley Steamer automobile—Emmons spent the summers photographing family and neighbors in her childhood hometown of Kingfield, Maine. Her sentimental views of one-room schoolhouses, horse-drawn hay wagons, children rolling barrel hoops, and white-bearded patriarchs shucking corn are unexcelled for their sympathetic depictions of American country life.



**New England  
photographer Chansonetta  
Stanley Emmons  
documented  
turn-of-the-century rural  
life in her childhood  
hometown of Kingfield,  
Maine (above).**





# ARTISTIC VISION— AND AN ARTISTIC VISIONARY

**T**he first photographs were admired because they mirrored reality. The camera's ability to faithfully re-create the scene before it exceeded that of any other medium.

But by its very nature, photography also invited comparisons with other types of pictorial representation. Photography was clearly a vehicle of communication; but could it also be a valid means of self-expression? Was photography a legitimate art form? And if photography was art, should it emulate other mediums of artistic expression?

Almost from the beginning, some photographers were asking and attempting to answer such questions. As early as mid-century a few (particularly in England) were consciously imitating various styles of paintings, including genre and allegorical scenes.

During the 1880s and '90s interest in the aesthetic aspects of photogra-

phy intensified as technical advancements simplified picture-making, giving more amateurs access to the medium and freeing them to devote attention to such elements as pictorial composition. Artistically inclined enthusiasts formed groups—including the Linked Ring in London and the Camera Club in New York—and held shows. But photography still lacked widespread recognition as a valid art form.

Then an intense, articulate, Hoboken-born photographer named Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) stepped onto the scene and almost singlehandedly transformed pictorial photography and the world's perception of it. Although Stieglitz merits recognition as one of the finest artistic photographers of his day, his greater significance from 1900 until his death nearly half a century later was as a critic and spokesman. In 1902, at odds with the Camera Club and the status of pictorial photography in America, Stieglitz created the Photo-Secession, an informal group of leading amateurs, "to hold together those Americans devoted to pictorial photography [and] exhibit the best that has been accomplished by its members or other photographers and above all to dignify that profession until recently looked upon as a trade." As editor of *Camera Work*—probably the finest photographic magazine ever published—and as proprietor of a gallery at 291 Fifth Avenue in New York, Stieglitz became the most influential force in American photography and earned for it unchallenged status as a unique and respected art form.



**Images from Alfred Stieglitz's Photo-Secession group: "The Flatiron" by Edward Steichen (opposite); "The Ring Toss" by Clarence H. White (left); and "Blessed Art Thou Among Women" by Gertrude Käsebier (above).**



# AN AWAKENING SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

**A** destitute immigrant who struggled for survival on the streets of New York City following his arrival from Denmark in 1870, Jacob A. Riis (1849-1914) was well acquainted with the terrible poverty and suffering that pervaded the city's tenements, seven-cent lodging houses, and sweatshops. Later, as a police reporter for the *New York Tribune* and *Evening Sun* during 1877-99, Riis again found himself thrown into contact with the darker side of New York life. Rebelling against the inhumanity he witnessed in the slums, Riis evolved into a muckraking journalist and social reformer, recording what he saw in impassioned words and stark photographs. In addition to writing hundreds of newspaper and magazine

articles describing the plight of New York's poor, Riis gave lectures illustrated with lantern slides from his photographs, and authored more than a dozen books. His *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) was among the first books ever to include a number of halftone illustrations. To picture the abhorrent conditions in crowded tenement rooms and transient lodgings, the self-taught photographer pioneered the use of flash photography, repeatedly risking injury and blindness from the magnesium flash powder he ignited in a frying pan. Among those influenced by Riis's reports and pictures was New York police board commissioner Theodore Roosevelt; the subsequent association between the two led to numerous social reforms.

Similarly involved in using photography to correct social injustices was Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940). Hine learned photography while teaching school in New York, and his first important pictures documented the tribulations of immigrants at Ellis Island in 1905. Many of Hine's most powerful images date from his years as an investigator for the National Child Labor Committee during 1908-1916, when he graphically depicted the exploitation of children in factories.

Paving the way for later reformers, Riis and Hine demonstrated that the camera is not only a useful tool for recording social ills but that its images can wield great moral power in helping to correct them.

**Pioneering photojournalist Jacob A. Riis's picture of an Italian rag picker in her Jersey Street lodgings (right) was one of hundreds of such views he made in an effort to draw public attention to the plight of New York City's poor. Immigrants on Ellis Island (opposite) were an early subject for Lewis W. Hine; later he documented the exploitation of children in many of the nation's factories.**



JACOB RIIS COLLECTION, MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY AT GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE





ture of disdain and puzzlement. But most of the younger residents, who know Steinbeck only through his books, regard him with unabashed affection.

Fifty years after *The Grapes of Wrath* first appeared in American bookstores, Steinbeck holds the loyalty of an ever-growing number of readers, both young and old. In "Steinbeck Country," as elsewhere, succeeding generations find renewed inspiration in the novelist's finest works—*The Pastures of Heaven* (1932), *The Red Pony* (1933), *Tortilla Flat* (1935), *Of Mice and Men* (1937), *The Long Valley* (1935), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), *Cannery Row* (1945), *The Pearl* (1947), and *East of Eden* (1952)—works that reaffirm Steinbeck's enduring theme: "man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit."

A visit to "Steinbeck Country" today can acquaint old Steinbeck admirers with the writer—and introduce new readers to his books.

Such a visit should begin in Salinas, off U.S. Highway 101 about one hundred miles south of San Francisco. The house at 132 Central Avenue near the center of town in which Steinbeck was born still stands. Built in 1897, it is a comfortable story-and-a-half Victorian with gingerbread gables, carved brackets, and a graceful Queen Anne tower overlooking a neat garden of green lawns and colorful flowers. Acquired by the non-profit Valley Guild of Salinas in the early 1970s, the Steinbeck House has been restored to its turn-of-the-century appearance. Lunch is served every weekday in the parlor, while books by and about Steinbeck and Salinas are available in the Best Cellar Gift Shop in the basement. Restaurant reservations are required; the gift shop is open to the public Monday through Friday from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Four blocks from the Steinbeck House, at 110 West San Luis Street, a life-sized bronze statue of the writer stands guard over the entrance to the Salinas public library, in 1969 renamed the John Steinbeck Library. This institution boasts one of the country's largest collections of Steinbeck manuscripts, photo-

graphs, tape recordings, and first editions. The Steinbeck Archives are available for scholarly use by appointment only; the John Steinbeck Room, displaying a rich array of photographs, posters, newspaper clippings, and manuscripts, is open to the public daily. The library sells a good selection of books and pamphlets by and about Steinbeck, including a paperback *Guide to Steinbeck Country* with maps keyed to the writer's major works.

**Steinbeck would  
no doubt decry  
commercialization  
of the region—  
but might laugh  
at the irony  
that he is  
responsible for  
much of the fuss.**

Each year in midsummer, the Steinbeck Library hosts the "Steinbeck Festival"—where Steinbeck friends, admirers, and scholars gather for lectures, round-table discussions, and showings of popular Steinbeck films such as *East of Eden*, filmed in Salinas in 1954. Festival events are held in the library and Salinas Community Center.

Any visit to "Steinbeck Country" must include stops in Monterey and Pacific Grove, about eighteen miles west of Salinas on State Highway 68. Steinbeck spent most of his summers in Pacific Grove when he was a boy, and as a young man he haunted the six-block-long stretch of waterfront between Pacific Grove and Monterey called Cannery Row. Although the sardine canneries that crowded Cannery Row from the 1920s through the 1940s have long since ceased operation, much of the street is revitalized—now crowded with a bewildering array of hotels, restaurants, gift shops, and art galleries. A few of the old cannery buildings have been converted to modern uses, and new structures

have been added. But some of the places memorialized in *Cannery Row* and its sequel, *Sweet Thursday* (1954), survive. The weathered wooden building at 800 Cannery Row that once housed the Pacific Biological Laboratories (home and office of the memorable "Doc" Ed Ricketts) is now a private men's club. Lee Chong's General Store at 835 Cannery Row offers a variety of local wares—clothing, jewelry, pottery, glassware, and paintings. Behind the main showroom is a smaller room filled with Steinbeck memorabilia—posters, photographs, old newspaper clippings, magazines, and books. The huge new Monterey Bay Aquarium, opened in 1985 just a few doors from "Doc's" lab, is one of the region's major tourist attractions; another popular stop-off is a bronze bust of Steinbeck that stands in front of a parking lot near Cannery Row's intersection with Prescott Street.

"Steinbeck Country" has changed dramatically since the writer left it in the late 1940s (he spent the last twenty years of his life in and around New York City). The once-quiet town of Salinas is now a busy city of more than one hundred thousand, and Cannery Row, once the home of bustling armies of fishermen and cannery workers, is now crowded with tourists. An intensely private man for all his celebrity, Steinbeck would no doubt decry all the commercialization. But he might laugh when reflecting on the irony that he himself was responsible for most of the fuss. If he had not written so convincingly about the hills and valleys and towns of the central California coast—if he had not created characters who seized the imagination and stirred the heart as memorably as "Doc" of *Cannery Row*, Cal and Aron Trask of *East of Eden*, "Ma" and "Pa" Joad of *The Grapes of Wrath*, and George and Lennie of *Of Mice and Men*, the region would be a little less crowded than it is—and the pages of American literature would be infinitely less enriching. ★

*Brian McGinty is a frequent contributor to American History Illustrated. Before moving to the San Francisco Bay area, he lived in the heart of "Steinbeck Country" for more than fifteen years.*

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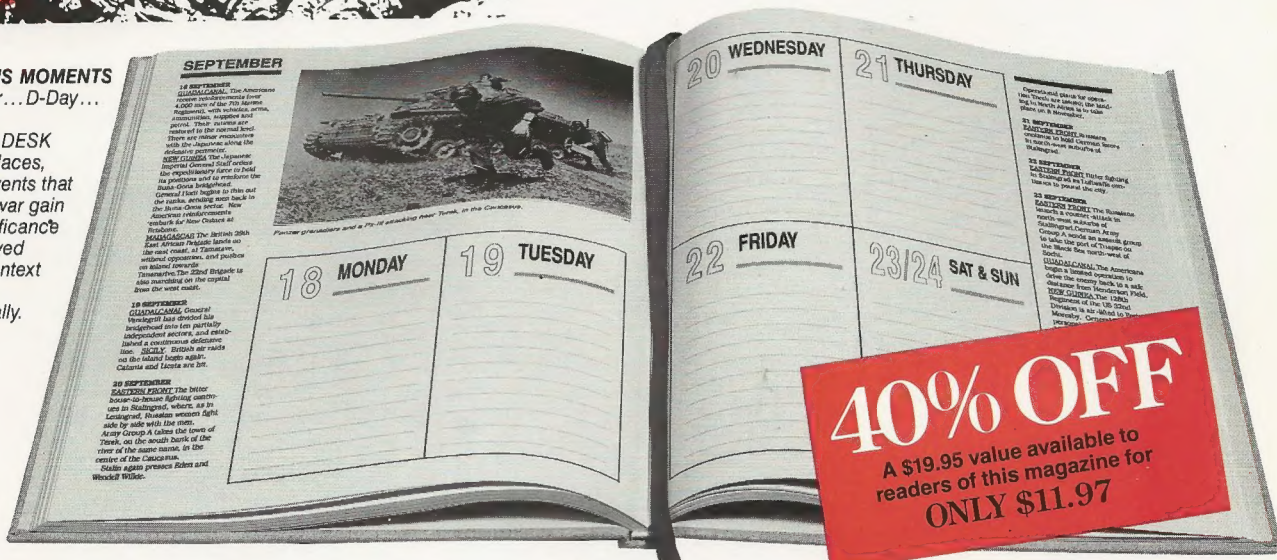


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